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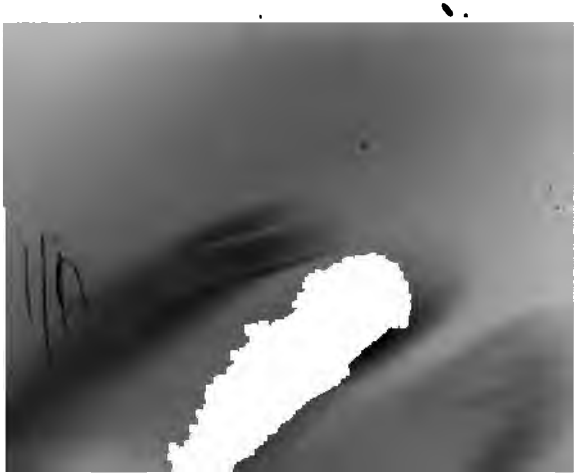
THE WITCH OF NEMI

AND OTHER POEMS

E. St JOHN-BRENON



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THE WITCH OF NEMI,

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

EDWARD ST. JOHN-BRENON.

A NEW EDITION.

London:
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1881.

TO

MY WIFE

I Dedicate this Book.

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ARGUMENT.

APOLLO becoming enamoured of a Vestal virgin, dishonoured her. But fearing lest the mother of his unborn child should be condemned to death, conveyed her secretly to Umbria, where she gave birth to a beautiful boy. The Vestal died before he arrived at man's estate. This youth in his turn fell in love with an Umbrian maid. But Vesta, ever mindful of the grievous wrong Apollo wrought her, came disguised as a Grecian damsel to the grape harvest of Umbria, and caused this youth to appear to his lover to be a-wooing her. Wherefore the maiden, smitten with jealousy most dire, encompassed her lover's death by treachery. For this cause Jove, at the request of Apollo, visited the maiden with a dreadful woe, by endowing her with endless life, and turning her heart to an unquenchable fire. In her desolation she wandered to the volcano Nemi, believing that by watching the contention of its fire hers would be soothed. Seeing this, Apollo took compassion on her, and besought his father, Jove, to revoke his former decree. But this the King of Gods and man durst not do; yet to satisfy his son he changed the volcano into a lake, from whence the maiden might drink, and thus cool the fires that perpetually ravished her. Apollo considering this act insufficient in mercy, severely rebuked his father; whereupon a strange sedition arose in Hades, and well nigh a revolt in Heaven.

THE WITCH OF NEMI.

In the old days when gods like mortals wooed
The maids of earth, and for their favours sued,
Where now a lake in peace embosomed lies,
A raging furnace breathed unto the skies,
And round its base there wandered to and fro
A thrall of hate and life's absorbing woe;
And still she haunts the shore and cypress grove
A deathless wreck of jealousy and love,
Whose doleful wails when evening's curtain falls
Fret the low sighing breeze at intervals.

Come, round me gather all, and I will sing
The wrath that made of love a weird thing!

As yet when earth and heaven enjoyed one sun,
And gods and men in happy concord won
From each respect, and honoured worship due,

A lovely virgin did Apollo woo.
E'en her, the fairest of her race and kin,
The gods and men heroic strove to win.
But her the virgin goddess truly loved,
And Vesta wrathfully the gods reproved,
Clasped the chaste maiden to her loveless breast,
And with these words the wildered maid addressed :
' For you the gods and men do strive in love,
You whom I've blest from my high throne above,
You whom I've guarded with a jealous care.
Of gods' and mortals' love I say—beware ;
For I have seen the fairest hour of bliss
Changed into life-long sorrow by a kiss.
Be thou my priestess, watch my altars' fires,
And I shall grant thee all thine heart's desires ;
For thee shall Love his cunning arts fulfil,
And joyous pleasure e'er attend thy will.'

The maiden smiled, and vowed for aye to be
A vestal virgin for felicity.
Which vow when whispered in the higher world,
By jealous gods contending arts were hurled
Into the vestal's breast for woe or weal,
And secret passion in her heart did steal ;

But Vesta, ever mindful of her care,
Breathed in the priestess' soul a soft—beware.

Of all the gods the chiefest in the strife
The beautiful Apollo was, Elysian life
For him, alas, had heavenly pleasures few
While he would Love in vestal robes pursue.
One night while she chaste Vesta's fires did guard
From heaven the god came down for Love's reward.
When as the vestal prayed before the fires
Within her breast were wakened strange desires,
Vesta unmindful: for great Jove agreed
To help Apollo in his hour of need;
Therefore, when he from high Olympus stole,
Jove plighted Vesta in a nectareous bowl;
Whereon the goddess, piqued with honours vain,
Quaffed the full cup, Jove pledging her again:
And thus she quaffed until she told her love
Unblushingly for the almighty Jove.

Meanwhile on earth when all the world was still
Apollo wrought his empyrean will,
Taught the fair vestal love's inspiring bliss,
And showed life's fruitful joys dwelt in a kiss.

The generous moons full-seasoned caused to bloom
A mortal flower within the vestal's womb,
Which thing the goddess saw, and with fierce breath
Consigned her priestess to a lingering death.
But Jove disproved, and by Apollo's will
He bore the god's spouse to an Umbrian hill.
Here to Apollo did she bear a son
Whom nature lavished all her favours on;
But ere the babe matured to manhood's pride
The mother languished for her love and died.

The youth increased in stature and in strength,
Comely in form and feature, till at length
A maiden lovely as the blushing dawn,
Gentle and timorous as the milk-white fawn
That starts from out an Umbrian brake at morn
When frighted by the ruthless hunter's horn,
Waked with her eyes of love-absorbing fires
The dormant flame that youth to love inspires.
A mortal she of lineage and race,
But goddess-like in bearing and in grace,
A guileless maid whose innocence should prove
An artful monitor to hate and love.

In visions fair the youth of loves had dreamed,
Loves robed in subtle beauty, and which seemed
Strange beings, such as mortals seldom see,
Of lissome limb and graceful symmetry;
Yet none did seem as magical as this
That brought unto his soul such trancing bliss;
None so supremely sweet, whose love intense
Was hallowed by ethereal influence;
And yet an earthly pledge of human love,
Fruit of the mingled sweets that are thereof,
A virgin round the summers of whose years
Love trellissed joys to warp consuming fears.
On her the Graces all their charms bestowed,
And with ethereal light her blue eyes glowed,
From whence flashed rays that amorous hearts enthrall,
To bind with chains of love the hearts of all;
Her voice was as a lute's that wooes the breeze
Of night with its delicious harmonies.
Such was his love, as strange a thing as Spring,
Which did enraptured treasures to her bring,
Taught the winged fancies of her airy soul
That life to be complete must taste love's bowl.
They drank, alas, and perished by the draught
Their eager souls unwittingly had quaffed;

For Discord, wroth that such sweet bliss should be,
Cast in their midst the seeds of jealousy.

It happed that in the month when rich-dowered vines
Are garnered of the fruits that yield rich wines,
From Rome came damsels dark of eye and skin
Who helped to gather the grape-harvest in.
Amongst them there was one of Grecian race,
Lofty of mien, and arrogant of face,
Who with alluring ways Apollo's son
Made seem to shower his loving favours on;
The while unmindful of his lover's wrath—
Not seeing it, he faithful to his troth—
Chafed the dark Grecian with sweet tales of loves
Of Nymphs and Satyrs in the neighbouring groves.
These favours magnified by Love's fond eyes
Nurtured the tares of blighting jealousies.

And so it fell when all the vine-trees' fruits
Were garnered 'mid the strains of songs and lutes,
When the light dance made all hearts full with joy
One maiden soul was sick with hate's alloy—
The hate of jealousy, wherefore she strove
To slay the Grecian and her faithless love.

In treacherous wrath she asked them to partake
At festal supper, poisoned leavened cake—
Wherewith their souls from earth would pass away,
And make in their swift deaths their nuptial day—
The cake her lover ate with hearty glee ;
But she, the dark-eyed damsel, sparingly.
And as they supped the youth was stricken dead ;
Whereon she turning to the maiden said,
'I Vesta am, from whom this youth's sire stole
My fairest priestess, whilst the friendly bowl
I did partake with awe-inspiring Jove,
And told the Thunderer my immortal love.
But me Jove mocked to help a lustful god,
Which to revenge I've come from my abode :
Mindful of all the griefs Apollo wrought,
Through all these lands my vestal frail I've sought ;
Bound by my oath to avenge this direful woe,
And in my wrath to lay the perjurer low.
But this the Fates forewilled, and her soul's shade
Now wanders through broad Enna's flowery glade,
Where Pluto's queen doth endless welcomes keep,
And earth-born pains enjoy eternal sleep.
Disfavoured thus, the gods for honours done
Lent to my wrath Apollo's base-born son,

Him, by the hand of jealous love, I slew,
He faithful to the troth he plighted you.—
On you then be your slaughtered lover's blood.'

Then rose the goddess, and augustly stood
Before the sorrow-stricken maid, and laughed
In ruthless glee, 'The luscious cup I quaffed
With thee, O Father of all gods and men,
Unto my soul made love delicious then,
But thou mad'st slight the passion then inspired,
And with consuming hate my soul was fired;
So goddess-like I've wrought my awful will,
And to Apollo's son borne speedy ill.
Upon this maiden, slave of fate's decree,
Hurl thine avenging wrath, a mortal she—
But I a queen immortal still shall live
To show thee slighted love can ne'er forgive.'
Then did she glide from out the lorn maid's sight
Behind the curtains of the purple night,
Upon whose breath the light-winged zephyrs bore
This dismal wail from death's sigh-surging shore,
'Ye gods, an angry god's offending woe
Shall with thee, maiden, through life's journey go.'
Then in the woods the voices of the night

Ceased to make music for the faun and spright,
And the pale stars their silent vigils kept,
While all, but she, the wildered maiden, slept.
Life seemed to pause, meanwhile each swaying tree
Sobbed through the lonely night its sympathy.

Now, saffron-clad, the mellow morning rose
Awaking half the world from sleep's repose,
Whenas Apollo stood before Jove's throne,
Requiring vengeance for late evils done
By her who in her heart's desponding dearth
Slew her dear love, a demi-god by birth;
In whose charmed death the ruthless Fates combined
To grant full measure to Queen Vesta's mind,
Regardless who with agonizing tread
Should trample tares of woe on their doomed head.
For this dire deed Apollo sought from Jove
Requital for an outraged father's love,
Besought the Father in his raging ire
To turn the maiden's heart to quenchless fire.
Jove hearkened: then with lightning, his decree
Made full the maiden's soul with misery;
Not Vesta's; she, whose hate and cunning ways,
Brought to the youth's sweet life an end of days,

Whose wrath, keen whet by slighted love, designed
To wreck an amorous damsel's peace of mind,
But she a goddess mocked the Thunderer's hate,
And left her victim to propitiate
The gods for blood in impious passion shed
Ere from Olympus fearful vengeance sped.

Like gods, like men, the will that smites with power
We seldom strike at, but the fragile flower
Whose thorns us wound, fulfilling heaven's high wish,
With death we compass, and triumphant crush.

Racked by the flames that burned within her heart
The maid sought peace from each alluring art,
Strove to appease the Almighty's wrath with vows,
And votive offerings, such as he allows
Grief-stricken mortals to make unto him
When the soul pines, and tears make bright eyes dim.
But peace was not for her: the high god heard
But hearkened not unto her suppliant word;
For those whom Jove in his dire anger smites
Life hath not pleasures, nor the earth delights.
E'en such as feel the fury of his breath
Twere better, far, they wooed the kiss of death:

For them love wakes not, nor its passion thrills
With dazzling beauty Life's revolving ills.

At length the maid, by burning sorrow driven,
Sought upon earth the peace desired of heaven,
Wandered to Nemi, where a raging fire
Belched unto heaven hell's fierce relentless ire;
For there she hoped such fury would appease
The ceaseless tortures of her heart's disease,
The gods on her would pity take, forsooth,
And still the anguish of her blighted youth.

Here from a cavern by the mountain's base
The love-lorn maiden, outcast of her race,
Bound by the sorrow of the Thunderer's spell
Watched the wild tempests of conspiring hell;
For she had hoped, by guarding noisome fires,
To appease the gnawings of her heart's desires;
Had hoped, with Hope's imaginings vain,
To calm her writhing soul's devouring pain
By adding anguish to her god-sent woe
In seeing hell's dread wrath contending so.
Thus wearily the years of her youth's prime

Sped on the wings of unrelenting time,
Till deathless sorrow cast on her its pall,
And the sere leaves of Hope began to fall.
Thus passed a century of bitter years
Bathed in the streams of sigh-fermented tears.

Who has not seen when misery fills the soul
The surf of disappointment scattered, roll
Upon the strand of some dark hidden peace
To bear our shackled griefs a swift release,
As they, purloined of their Satanic spell,
Sink in an abyss unfathomable?
Who has not seen when hope forsakes our breasts
A strange fulfilment to our soul's behests?
E'en while our spirits languish in regret
New pleasures teach our memories to forget;
And the old anguish that was decked with bays
Is sepulchred in dark oblivious days?

Apollo weening that her years of pain
Had made atonement for her lover slain,
A youth whose lofty mien, and lovely face,
Proclaimed the godhead of his sire and race,
Besought great Jove, by mercy's tender art,

To quench the flames that parched the damsel's heart;
For, 'Father of all gods and men,' said he,
'No crime, or earth-begrimed iniquity,
Can measure guilt with that relentless foe
Who man condemns for sin to endless woe;
Nor can the faults designed in life's short spell
Deserve eternal punishment in hell;
For man is thrall to thine austerest will,
And when he errs he is obedient still.
Therefore, wilt thou a servile life consign
To tortures endless by decree divine?
Nay, mighty Jove, in will omnipotent
Thine ancient anger to this maid relent,
Quench the dread flame that gnaws her virgin-breast,
And grant in mercy this thy son's request.'

The awe-inspiring God whose powers are full,
Yet still in love and hate immutable,
Looked on Apollo with assenting nod,
And thus made answer to the suppliant god :—
'For thee, did I my awful vengeance pour
On her who jealous unto Lethe's shore
Thine earth-born son with secret poison sent,
As thitherward foiled Vesta's hatred went;

For thee, Apollo, of the gods most fair,
Who me assails with pure immortal prayer,
I would to thy behests fulfilment bring,
But I, who am of gods and men the king,
Durst not in this revoke my former will
Lest I, foresworn, bear men untoward ill.
The spell of days divided, and the hours
Of time are mortals', and the winter's showers
Give travailling earth with its sharp tears
A recompense for barren wasted years,
And oft in sorrow youth is weaned of woe,
And pain unbidden netherward doth go.
But wrath begun with heaven-avenging fire
Sent into human hearts can ne'er expire.
Yet, by the majesty of mine own oath,
From mercy's paths to stray I am ever loth ;
Certes, I'll bring this stricken damsel peace,
And from eternal woes her soul release.'

Then went Apollo joyful on his way,
Regretful for the prayer of that dire day
That brought a love-lorn maid such years of pain,
Years that should wax ere ever they should wain.
Though heedful of the Thunderer's promise given,

And godlike loyal to the vows of heaven,
Yet wondered he how Jove a means could find
To fashion forth his wish unchanged in mind,
Subvert the wrath, that brought such grievous ill,
By searching mercy's ways to work his will:
Though he a god, but moulded to his sphere,
His penetrating ken could scale not near
The intricate heights of Jove's supremest ways
Hid in the depths of undissolving days;
Nor could he scan with his divining soul
The arts Olympus' chief held in control,
Whereby he would the maiden's griefs dispel,
And still be in his ways immutable.

Like gods, like men, beyond their native range,
Reason makes fools, and doth men's wits estrange.

Swift from Olympus went Jove's high commands
Spreading dismay throughout Italian lands;
His lightnings flashed, his boisterous thunders rolled
With intermittent ragings uncontrolled;
Heaven's floodgates oped, and downward poured
Its wrathful seas, obedient to his word.
Then mortals fearful lest the world again

Should be o'erdeluged by descending rain,
The God propitiated in their fears,
And slew upon his altars snow-white steers,
Such as one sees at spring-time's sundown driven
By Tiber's banks, when through the gates of heaven
Fall the sun's shadows like rich streams of gold
Ere daylight sinks behind night's purple fold,
Steers that for mortals never bore a load,
Meat suited to the palate of a god.

But Jove beheld, and thought within his heart,
'How finite man is in his every part,
Not knowing of our high empyreal will,
He deems our mercy nought but anger still;
Forgetting that the sun which thaws the snows
May also be the harbinger of woes,
Which severs with its warm and balmy breath
The ice-bound avalanche to scatter death;
Unmindful that the rain which swamps the lands
May be a gift of mercy from our hands,
And the dread lightnings we from heaven have hurled
May still the fires that undermine the world,
E'en quench the flames that with contentious strife,
Had wrecked for years a fellow-mortal's life.

O men, ye are with all your reason blind,
In comprehension mean, an atom to our mind.
When chastened by our pity's kindly rods,
Ye think us cruel, and contemn the gods;
Complot with vain rebellious arts to find
The secrets of our judgments to mankind,
Mock at our mercy, scorn our god-like love,
Since we for good your impious acts reprove
That ye may shun the gins that trap to hell,
And woes eternal, soul-destructible.
For you the sun and moon and stars do shine,
Made luminous by love and light divine;
For you the storms from bondage we release
That ye may find in calm more perfect peace;
For you the lightnings splinter in the skies,
Responsive to the thunder's harmonies;
And yet ye would our empyrean scale,
For ye would fain against the gods prevail,
Would fain usurp the warder of our might,
And dim our glory with impervious night,
But yet, withal, forgiving we comply
Unto your prayers, and soothe your destiny,
And ere your souls we yield to Hades' gloom
Death of its terrors we in love desume,

Robing your spirits, by supreme decree,
In all the sheen of immortality.
When will ye cease, O men, in vaunting pride
To search the ways, a myriad streams divide?
When cease to scan from reason's phantom towers
The wisdom that impels the love that's ours?
For deem ye we a god, creator still,
Can thus be fathomed by your finite skill?
O perverse children of a stiff-necked race,
Turn from backsliding ways to paths of grace;
For when we of our ancient wrath relent,
The heralder of peace or lightning's sent,
Charged with the message of our generous love,
From heights Olympian, and Olympian Jove.'

Meanwhile the wroth volcano belched on high
Flames that made crimson all the night-wrapt sky,
And shook with an internal strife the earth,
And gave to earthquakes an abortive birth,
Roared in its rage as by sore pains oppressed,
And grumbling sank to an eternal rest.

When the faint shadows of the morning fell,
Peace held the world in its delicious spell,
And Zephyr breathed his perfumed airs abroad

In token of the favour of the god;
And the fierce mount, that with consuming fire
Threatened all lands with desolation dire,
In earth's convulsion sank below its base,
And crystal waters rippled o'er the place;
Around it rose steep hills of living green
Whereon the sheep and agile goat were seen,
And louder than the fretful pine-trees' sigh
Was heard the skylark's liquid melody,
Then from her cave the wildered maiden rose,
And drank the lake's sweet waters, chill as snows
That melt to silvery streams on native hills
And murmuring trickle through their self-made rills.

Now when Latona's son saw what was done,
He bowed before his awful father's throne;
Seven times he homage paid; then thuswise spake,
'Thou, O great sire, who for my anger's sake
Didst pour on one the vials of thy hate,
Yielding her soul to Nemesis and fate,
And who didst yesterday her griefs assuage,
Repentant of thy former ruthless rage,
Didst soothe the tempests of her virgin breast,
Compliant in thy love to my behest,

Appeased, but quenched not, those fierce fires
Her stricken spirit each drawn breath respires,
Whose heart would drown itself in cooling seas
To slake thereby its deathless agonies.
O father, in the fulness of thy love,
Pour down the plenteous mercy sprung thereof;
Quench thou those flames with thine all-potent might
And blot remembrance out of memory's sight.
For, surely, years of agony below
Have more than quitted mine—a father's woe,
Requited more than seventy times the pain
When Death the soul I gave me gave again.
'Gainst this poor maid the false Erinyes strove,
By hatred urged, to smite her youthful love.
Not hers the guilt: 'twas Vesta's blighting guile
Surcharged a soul with jealousy, the while
She all the furies of revenge pent up,
Till he, my son, should drink the poisoned cup.
She ever mindful of that day, O Jove,
When drunk with nectar she confessed her love
For thee, to whose great power a bowl she quaffed,
The which thou mocking toldst the gods and laughed.
Thus slighted, she her vengeance keen did whet
To pay through me her heart's most bitter debt

In suchwise as her soul would deem divine
Since for my sake thou plighted her in wine,
While I before her own eternal fires
Her vestal taught to yield to my desires.
For this did Vesta in her wrath pursue
The offspring of my loins; for this she slew
By his fair lover's hands, the life I gave,
And sent his soul across Styx' silent wave.
But we are gods: and shall our deeds be worse
Than mortals' whom we smite with death, and curse?
Can we in heaven rebuke the crimes of earth,
Since our example gives to crime a birth?
Since sinning thus these mortals serve us still;
We prompt the fault, and they obey our will.
Yet 'tis for this that souls are lost in hell,
For we in love, not hate, are mutable.
Turn to the ways where justice sits on high,
Weighing life's sorrow with eternity;
From all thine ancient deeds of hate relent,
And hearken to the prayers the penitent
Within thy temples utter, soft and low,
Lest thou in hate dam life's blood in its flow.
Stretch forth thine hand with power, and quell
The woes that on this maiden's life befell,

On that dire day when I to thee repaired,
Distraught in soul from all the griefs I shared,
To ask thee by thy vengeance to increase
This maiden's grief, and spoil her hope of peace.
Complete the work love yesterday began,
And with tormenting fires cease scourging man;
Dispel the darkening clouds that gather there
Where unresponsive tears evoke a prayer,
Where pitying eyes upturned to thee require
A respite to her soul's unsatiate ire.
Stretch forth thy sceptre, and therewith allay
The flames that leck her spirit night and day!
Complete the mercy yester-eve begun
Ere dawn doth usher in the morrow's sun;
Make full the favours of thy grace, O Jove,
And quell this maiden's anguish with thy love!
Forgetful of mine ancient prayer and hate,
Hearken, since I would fain propitiate
My former hest whereby this damsel's life
Was wedded to a never-dying strife!
For well we wot thou who dost scatter death
Can also calm the tempests by thy breath,
That the winged-word which doth hell's anger calm
Can also give a wounded soul the balm

Of peaceful years, and quiet, and full health,
And all that is to man eternal wealth,
The fairest of fair things that e'er can be,
The fruitful hope of immortality.
Vaunt not thy might by making mountains sink
Till waters well therefrom, whence she may drink
To soothe the weary sorrows of past years,
Which with tormenting fires revive with tears!
Nay, rather quench her heart's consuming fire,
And thus make manifest thy might, O Sire.'

The while Apollo spake the thunderer frowned,
But now he rose disturbed, and smote the ground,
Then groaned aloud as though his soul was vexed,
And with conflicting thoughts his mind perplexed.
But yet he spake not: then upon his son
He gazed awhile, and turning to his throne
He seven times smote it with his lightning rod,
As thrones are struck when stricken by a god.
Anon, from his empyreal head, the crown
He wore, since he was crowned heaven's king, fell down,
From which there darted lightnings pale and red,
That in demoniac glee played round his head.
Then the four winds let loose from out their caves

Lashed the deep seas to heaven ascending waves;
The Phorcydes drew back the veil of night
To gape upon the desolating sight;
The one-eyed Cyclopes peeped from their forge,
Wherein they fashioned Jove's all-vengeful scourge,
Whose lightning shafts, and thunder-bolts when hurled
Spread death and wild destruction through the world.
For now to all, Hell's deep abyss was plain
From Hades' shores to Tartarus' black main,
On which Jove gazed with agonizing look
Till the foundations of Olympus shook;
For never had his god-like eyes beheld
The woe to which his swift decrees impelled
Sin-burthened man his errors to atone.

Then slow descending from his riven throne,
He stood upon the verge of that abyss
From whence sighs 'rose mid many a demon's hiss;
He stood as near as gods celestial can
To hear the cries of hell-condemnèd man.
Even while he listened shrieks arose from hell,
Which Pluto and his minions fain would quell,
Lest Jove all-fearful of a new revolt
Would hurl 'gainst him his god-avenging bolt.

But no avail: for still they madly cried
'Gainst Jove's uncurbed and uncompliant pride.
Even louder still in shrieks the female tongues
Railed against him for his eternal wrongs,
And told the thunderer with unblushing face
His own unrighteous deeds brought their disgrace,
That he their blood distilled to sin and lust
To mock them for their all-confiding trust.

Then Proserpina from her couch arose
To hear her thrall's soul-saturated woes,
Then turning fiercely from those shades that wailed,
With bitter words she thus her sire assailed:
'Thou from whose mouth unmeted judgments fell
With crueller pangs than wingèd-words can tell,
And for whose sentence souls at Hades' gate
Even now thy heaven-sent retribution wait,
Thou who all-potent with absorbing breath
Dost combat man with ever-conquering death;
From where thou standest, looking from above,
Behold devouring flames consume thy love,
And the pent anguish of eternal years
Seethe in this furnace of desponding tears.'

Even as she spake some spirits groaned their crime,
And held on high a bowl, wherein a rime
Was seen, through which there struggled weary sighs,
Fretting the airs with uttered agonies,
And down its sides there trickled tears of blood
Into the fires beneath where Jove now stood,
Which, as they fell, in fumes of sighs returned
Like incense foul, to hideous blackness burned.
Others held urns, strange-fashioned, like a heart
Transfixed with death's life-barbèd dart,
From whence dark bloody sweat in bubbles burst
Which ever as they did, shrieked shrill, and curst
Their fate, till falling down like living sperm
They turned to flame, and then became a worm
Whose body crimson was, and of great length,
Full seventy cubits, and prodigious strength;
Its head was human, lovely to behold,
It seemed a woman's, filleted with gold,
With flowing hair whose dazzling hue might vie
With the sun's beams that fringe the western sky;
Her snow-white body down unto her waist
Seemed as a virgin's, earthly born, and chaste,
And from her shoulders wings, not arms, did grow
Whose feathers wore the peacocks brilliant glow.

Her eyes, like stars, absorbed their native blue,
And her bright teeth were of an opal hue.
Around her waist, whereat she joined the worm,
A ruby-jewelled girdle bound her firm,
From which was hung, enwoven by curious loom,
A robe whose weft was made of woman's womb,
Whereon was many a hieroglyphic sign,
Embroidered richly by some art divine,
Telling the joys wherewith each from their birth
Had made delicious transient life on earth.

Such were these reptiles, fair and foul to see,
Who tasted once of life's sublimity,
Decked in the ephemeral beauties of the flesh,
And crowned by Heaven with Hope's divinest wish ;
Whose lips the while they caught love's rapt impress
Blushed, trembled, at their own strange loveliness;
Whose bodies fashioned for delicious ways
Made pleasure one with sorrow's fruitful days,
Possessing all the favours that endear
Souls unto souls in this terrestrial sphere.
Anon they crawled to where o'er hell's abyss
Jove stood, and rose full-length towards him to hiss,

Then falling backwards tumbled far below
The depths of Hell's unutterable woe;
And ever as they fell there rose this cry
From myriad voices, 'Sin and misery.'
And Echo through his palace walls within
Was heard to murmur, 'Misery and sin.'

Anon was seen mid all this clangour loud,
Death desolate, without his nuptial shroud,
Through heaven's brass portals rushing out and in,
Shrieking with husky voice, 'O still-born sin,
Arise, awake you to your old desires
Ere life consign you to hell's thirsty fires,
Arise, come forth, from thine own mother's womb
Till Jove in mercy seal your damnèd doom.
Arise, arise, with all your barbarous din,
I will exalt you—I, the lord of sin.
With Gods I barter for your breath a span,
I, Death, the terror of sin-stricken man.'

Now Jove nor winced nor breathed with bated breath,
But paused to hear what each grim spectre saith;
Which when he heard he calmly gave a nod

Such as becomes a monarch and a god,
And ere again these dismal sounds did break
Upon his charmèd ears, he loudly spake,
And sternly called upon the dark-eyed Night
To draw her curtains o'er this mystic sight,
Lest these contentions might incite the gods
To strive against his power with treason's rods,
For such a scene was ne'er before revealed;
For Hell's domain from Heaven's was e'er concealed.

Then Night obedient to her sovereign's word
Drew her dark veil o'er all heaven saw and heard,
And nought of that drear sight was after seen,
Through which revolt above well nigh had been,
Save that when she below the horizon's bar
Lets fall her purple shroud, each jewelled star
That trembles 'neath a mortal's wistful gaze,
Is one of those lost souls who in old days
Questioned the justice of great Jove's decree,
And violent strove to conquer destiny.
These nightly watch, and wait their sleeping kin,
Till death to their flame chambers guide them in.
Where their soul's shades in gnashing grief do cry
Against the avenging gods eternally.

Man born to life, is dowered at birth with fear
Of Death, the hideous bane of pleasure here,
Here where we toil in sorrow ever on
Awaiting fearfully each morrow's sun.
And yet we longing watch the orient skies
Whence golden days from greyish dawn arise.
Full of new hopes we watch the awakening morn,
When daylight o'er the dark horizon's borne
Lightly on burnished wings that ever flies
Onward, unheedful of man's destinies.
Still, all we hazard in the morrow's light,
Lowers on our souls in darker shades than night,
Night from whose womb Death gains his secret power,
And hurtles fearlessly his shaft each hour.
Withal we hope with hope that's paled with doubt,
For life suspired at noon may urge life out.
Day after day we cheat the fearful odds
Laid on our souls against capricious gods
Who with a word may smite our sweetest breath
With all the fetid pestilence of death.
Day after day, uncertain of the next,
With fears of Death our weary spirits' vext;
Day after day each pleasure murmureth,
'The monotone of life is death—death—death.'

Can we, when on blanched mouldering bones we gaze,
Appease our terrors with uncertain days,
And inane hopes, that this degraded clay
Shall waken on a resurrection day?
I dare to doubt that we have more than life,
At best our portion here with sorrow rife;
We reap in anguish what we dare not sow,
The fecund tares of recompenseless woe.
Begot in rapture, and conceived in joy,
Our body's full of life's most sweet alloy;
The thrilling sweets that dower love's fruits with earth
Are soon embittered by the pangs of birth.
Ushered to earth and time with fear and pain,
From time our soul is ushered hence with twain,
Whither I know not, save where all have gone
Into the caverns of oblivion.
Offspring of nature, fashioned in the womb,
Love grasps life's light to yield it to the tomb.
Like a new comet travelling in the sky,
We rise in glory, and in setting die
Still in our native brilliancy arrayed
And clothed in radiancy from time we vade;
For the bright flame that gives our spirit power
Glows with its wonted splendour, till the hour

When as a vision soon we glide away,
The mean, unworthy pastime of a day.
Yet still while here, we fain would cozen fears
By burthening our souls with endless years,
Would fain make time the pledge to life,
That joys immortal wait on earthly strife.
O vain, delusive hope, that would dispel
Death of its terrors with a greater hell.

Like men, like dogs who at the moon do bark,
They hate the light that shows the night is dark.
With life our soul its tortuous journey wends,
And with the breath of life our journey ends.

The tumult o'er, great Jove with awful look
Did his rebellious son thuswise rebuke,
'For you, O Paean, did I turn from hate
To acts of mercy all compassionate;
For you did I by my great might eschew
The wrath I hurled from paradise for you
Upon this maiden, who by yon lake's brink,
To soothe her burning pangs, now stoops to drink;
And yet withal you by contention strove
To teach the world my mercy's hate, not love,

Strove to make all Olympus' gods rebel,
And waked sedition in the depths of hell;
Would fain have made the Cyclopes revolt,
And slay me by mine own fire thunder-bolt.
For this your crime, nathless you be a god,
Yon maiden shall for aye in sorrow plod
Life's thorny ways a phantom of despair,
A deathless spectre to your vengeful prayer.'

Here Jove ceased speaking: then Apollo went
Forth from his presence on new deeds intent,
Deeds merciful to man, thus to requite
The heaven-sent sorrow of his former spite.

Then did the amber Dawn in the east arise
To chase the sluggard Night from turquoise skies.

THE ACACIA BOWER.

LIST while the south-wind is breathing
Sweet songs above
Hush while the zephyrs are wreathing
Garlands of love
Mid the green leaflets that bower
The amorous dove
Listen! for Love's halcyon power
Cometh thereof.
For this is the hour when Love with his dower
Sleeps under the shade of the acacia bower.
Springtime and Summer, sunshine and shower,
O ever keep green our acacia bower!

List while the love-words are stealing
Into the soul!

Hush! while with doubt-stricken feeling
Ripple and roll
Vows from young hearts that discover
Passion's full bowl
Close to the lips of each lover
Faint from control.
For this is the hour when Love with his dower
Sleeps under the shade of the acacia bower.
Springtime and Summer, sunshine and shower,
O ever keep green our acacia bower!

List! while bedewed with love-whispers
The frail leaflets sigh
Evening's and sundown's late vespers,
Wafting on high
Feelings that burn in life's censer,
Fearful to die,
Union of spirits intenser
Than sympathy.
For this is the hour when Love with his dower
Dreams under the shade of the acacia bower.
Springtime and Summer, and sunshine and shower,
O ever keep green our acacia bower!

Hush ! now the souls of two lovers
Mingle and glow
Under the gloaming that covers
Pleasure and woe.
Murmurs love-laden, and seasons
Ripe and in bloom,
Full of sweet treasures and treasons,
Shelter in gloom.
For this is the hour when Love with his dower
Wakes under the shade of the acacia bower.
Summer-suns shining on Springtime's fresh flowers,
O ever keep green the acacia bowers !

Listen ! the grasses heave lightly.
Listen again !
Hear how the nightingales sprightly
Pour forth their strain !
Night falls with feelings delicious,
Waxing to wane,
Fraught with love's fancies and wishes
Strangers to pain.
For this is the hour when Love with his dower
Sits under the shade of the acacia bower.

Summer-suns shining on Springtime's fresh showers,
O ever keep green our acacia bowers!

Lo now the pipings of kisses,
Liquid and strong,
Trellis and echo life's blisses,
Falling among
Floweret's with Love's favours leaven,
Wafting along
Under the purple of heaven
Love's latest song.
For this is the hour when Love with his dower
Sings under the shade of the acacia bower.
Summer-suns shining on Springtime's fresh flowers,
O ever keep wreathed our acacia bowers!

List to the fountain's sweet water's
Murmuring stream!
Hearken! for one of Eve's daughters
Wakes from a dream
Delicious, and glowing with pleasure,
Bright in the gleam
Sparkling from Love's brilliant measure
Like a sun's beam!

For this is the hour when Love with his dower
Smiles under the shade of the acacia bower.
Summer-suns shining on Springtime's fresh flowers,
O ever keep wreathed our acacia bowers!

MY SOUL'S CHASE.

After the sun to the saddening west,
Onward and onward, never to rest,
Over the waves of the sinking sea,
Onward in chase of Eternity,
Lost in the vale of an unknown night,
Under the ray of a wasting light
Hurries my soul
Seeking the goal
Of Immortality.

After the sun to the distant west,
Onward in search of eternal rest,
Lost in the depths of the purple sky
Under the dome of eternity,

Lost in the desert of deathless night,
Under the ray of a wasted light
Hurries my soul
Seeking the goal
Of Immortality.

Chasing the day to its ruby rest,
Onward, where souls are for ever blest,
Onward and onward in search of bliss
Caught from the balm of an angel's kiss,
Lost in the swamp of a dismal night,
Lacking the ray of a wasting light
Hurries my soul
Seeking the goal
Of Immortality.

Chasing the day to its evening's rest,
Onward and onward unto the west,
Scaling the clouds that are foaming high
Dimming the gates of eternity,
Lost in the mist of a mournful night,
Watching the rays of a dazzling light
Hurries my soul
Seeking the goal
Of Immortality.

Onward and onward glideth the west
Mocking my life with an earthly rest,
Onward, beyond Time's limitless sea
Unto the verge of eternity,
    Over the surf of a struggling breath,
    Borne on the wings of treacherous death
        Hurries my soul
        Unto the goal
            Of Immortality.

STRIVINGS.

I STROVE with the breath of the evening
To fathom the meaning of night;
But the darkness bewildered my fancy,
Made waste with the shadows of light.

I strove with the breeze of the morning
To whisper me whence came the day;
But the splendour of noon smote my spirit
With longings for life's bright array.

I strove with the sunset for reason
Why time gathered peace in the west;
But sleep overcame all my visions
And lent to my strivings a rest.

I strove with the dawn for pleasure;
I strove with a senseless aim;
For life is a wearisome measure
Full-brimming with grief and pain.

I strove with the midnight in passion
For rest to my panting soul;
But Death on the night's wings did fashion
My hopes to its billowless roll.

I strove with the springtime for freshness,
For youth and its love made one;
But the breath of the winter withered
My hopes with an echoless moan.

I strove with the summer for sunshine
To brighten the darkness of pain;
But the shades of its glories soon waning
Made deeper the darkness again.

I strove with the harvest to garner
The ripened fruits of the years;
But pestilent sighings soon blighted
Their rich golden fruits in their ears.

I strove with the autumn to bury
The crisp crimson sorrows of life;
But the leaves to my footfall made answer,
'To strive against sorrow is strife.'

I strive with the winter to teach me
Whence cometh its joys; but it saith:
'The joys of our life are a phantom;
The earnest of life is in death.'

I strove then with Love to make holy
The pathways and byeways of sin;
But its pleasures were smitten with treason,
And all its fair favours a gin,

Wherein to entrap the unwary
With seemings of virtue and grace,
To shackle his spirit with sorrow,
And balm him with lies to his face.

I strove then with Lust for a season
To taste if its joyance were pure;
But the potion was mingled with anguish,
Which made my desires as a sewer.

I strove with my soul to encompass
The meaning of love and of lust;
But it murmured in sadness and silence,
'They are one and mutable—dust.'

I strove with my body to tell me
If lust and earth-love were the same;
And it answered: 'They twain are one passion
With a fair and a filthy name.'

I strove when the wroth waves were lashing
The sea's waters into white foam,
To learn in what caverns of Ocean
The desolate storms had a home;

But my strivings were vain and delusive:
For, surely, if wisdom were shod
With the secrets that slumber in heaven,
Then man were not man, but a god.

I strove when the tempests were riving
The skies with their thunders and fire,
To conjure my spirit to tell me
If death be the end of desire.

'Yea,' it murmured in accents that chilled me,
'The end of desire is in death.'
Then I wept; for my body's sweet cunning
After life never quickeneth.

I strove when the years of my life-time
  Were gay with their ripeness and bloom
To search out the depths of the future;
  But my heart whispered, 'Search in the tomb.'

Ah, surely, the pleasures of youth-tide
  Are galled by the tear-drops of death;
Yet we taste the diluted libation
  When God fills our body with breath.

I strove with the raptures of pleasure
  To mingle my breath with its joy;
But I found ere the autumn of life-time
  The potion did sicken and cloy.

I strove with sharp pain to discover
  If death were the dower of sin;
But a voice from the grave answered hollow,
  ''Tis fashioned with life from within.'

I strove at the noontide to dazzle
  My fears with the glories of hope;
But I saw that its splendours evanished
  As hours on Time's wings did elope.

I strove with the twilight to chasten
My doubts of hereafter with bliss;
But my soul in its orisons whispered,
'No boon is so sweet as life's is.'

I strive when the moon's in its crescent
To compass the source of its light;
But a cloud passing over bewilders
My strivings with darkness and night.

I strive when the summer-sun's shining
To grasp in my hand a bright beam;
But my heart mocking lispeth this answer,
'O vain is the drift of man's dream.'

I strive when the rainbow makes glorious
The highways of rain-fretted skies
To draw from its mystical beauties
A ray of my soul's paradise.

But the magic that hallows its splendours
Reflects on the mists of my doubt,
And I cry in my agony, Sorrow
And Misery soon find man out.

He travels to-day and to-morrow
  Blindfolded with years that shall be,
And he halts by the grave to prevision
  The joys of eternity.

And he sees there himself but a shadow,
  The phantom of pleasures that were,
And he trembles as earth fades for ever
  Behind the dark clouds of despair.

And he pauses to hear the low voices
  That welcome the spirits to bliss;—
But no voice breaks the silence of death-land
  For all round its dim shores is peace.

Then, then is the ocean of hopings
  Lashed into white waves by strange fears,
Till the heart quails before the false beacon
  That lights us to time-fallow years.

But Death with its pestilent breathings
  Soon blasts life's fair temple to dust;
So resigned we pursue the delusion
  With a will goaded on by a must.

I strive with my spirit to teach me
If God be dispenser of peace,
And I bide the response ere the terrors
Of luxuriant sorrows increase.

I strive, O I strive in my anguish,
And water my couch with my tears,
To learn if that Satan in pity
Requite our sin-travailing years.

I strive in my sadness to measure
The mystical years that shall come;
But I fail: for my reason is finite
And grasps not their infinite sum.

I've striven, and still am I striving
With Love in its noblest estate
To gather the fruits of its favours,
To baffle the furies of hate.

I strive with the skylark to waken
The sleepers of earth with my song;
But words to my thoughts make faint music,
And speech fails the sound to prolong.

I strive with the nightingale, sadly
To pour forth my spirit in woe ;
But my wailing only empoisons
The barb of Life's terror and foe.

I strive with the spectre of dreamland
To vision me whence comes man's breath ;
But the demons of darkness envelope
This mystical secret in death.

A DREAM-SONG.

DREAM on, my love, the magic light
  Of joy now fills my soul,
And peace dispels the fears of night,
  And Life's in Love's control.

Dream on, my love, the moments fly
  On the swift wings of time,
And all my hopes Eternity
  Bears to its aerial clime.

Dream on, my beauty, dream away—
  The dream of life is near:
Beyond the marge of dying day
  My life's love-song I hear.

Dream on—I hear the rushing sound
  Of death's engulphing wave.
Dream on—Death's surging seas abound,
  And roar around my grave.

Dream on—my earthly dreams now glow
With heaven's absorbing gleam ;
I see Love casts the robes of woe,
And glides beyond my dream.

Dream on—I dream—— [*The dreamer dies.*

* * * * *

The magic light
Of joy hath filled his soul ;
For peace dispelled the fears of night,
And Life's in Love's control.

A SONG.

I'LL to the woods where the violets grow,
Where the harebells and the cowslips blow;
There on the moss-bank close by the stream,
Shall my life glide like a lovely dream.
Then to the woods where the woodbine grows,
Mingling its sweets with the wild hedge-rose,
I will away at the break of day,
When the lark sings its awakening lay.

Down in the dell where the fire-flies light
The pixies' bower on a moonless night;
There where the elves on the glistening stream
Dance away night in a lovely dream,
I will away at the break of day,
Where the lark sings its awakening lay,
To breathe the sweets of the wild hedge-rose
In the old woods where the woodbine blows.

On the moss-bank by the glassy brook,
Under the shade of a sylvan nook,
From lily-cups that float by the brink,
I of the crystal water will drink.

So to the woods at the break of day
When the lark sings I'll hasten away;
Where the elves dance at night on the stream
Shall my life glide like a lovely dream.

LOCRINUS AND ESYLLT.

ARGUMENT.

Locrinus, King of Loegria, a portion of Britain, slays Hymyr, a viking, who has laid waste his brother's territory. Among the spoils is a princess, named Esyllt, whom he weds, being smitten with her exceeding beauty. But previously having been betrothed to Guendoline, the daughter of Corineus, Chief of Cornwall, he, fearing for Esyllt's life and his own, puts her away privily, and weds the Cornish princess, whom in course of time he repudiates, and recalls from her seclusion his lawful wife, who meanwhile has borne him a daughter. Then it comes to pass that all three are slain by this same Cornish Princess.

I.

'Tis well the gods have deemed it fit to hide
Our fate behind the mount or mole of years;
Lest terror-stricken mortals would them chide
By ever languishing mid unborn fears:
Clouds of despair would wrap our brows, and tears
Make big the direful phantom to our eyes,
And every dreamy hope and thought that cheers
Our journey to the land beyond the skies
A dis mal heralder would be of sad surprise.

II.

Locrinus king of Loegria held court
Of all the mighty men at Trinovant.
Thus with winged words addressing them: 'To sport
Of tournament, and tilt, and chase we grant
A holiday; nor shall we, till we plant
Our heel upon this Hymyr's neck, drink wine
Or wassail cup; but in his blood shall vaunt
Deeds valourous and great, through which shall shine
Our glorious descent from gods and men divine.

III.

'By usurpation on our brother's throne,
Hymyr the Hun, the bloody sea-king reigns,
And underneath his rule the Albans groan
As desolation wastes their fertile plains;
Wives are made widows, blood each brook distains;
Our maids dishonoured by his barbarous band;
The terror of his name fresh horror gains,
And cries of vengeance echo through the land,
And men beseech the gods to lend a succouring hand.'

IV.

Then rent the air as darting upward went
A thundering volume pregnant with applause,

And every eye dilated flashed assent,
And each heart prayed the gods to help the cause.
Then all was calm: as is the dreadful pause
Which Nature broods in when fierce storms presage.—
Then issuing from earth's dark depths she draws
From heaven in splendours riven divine-like rage.
So seemed this human wrath, alike in every age.

v.

Where the blue stream forsakes its amber groves,
And spreads to blend with Ocean's vast expanse,
Where vernal nature parts with all she loves,
And yields to waste the pleasures that enhance,
Where silvery shadows as fair wanton's dance
In soft delights night's tranquil hours away,
And myriad lamplets as they glow entrance
The scene that fadeth with awakening day,
Two mighty armies stood their prowess to display.

VI.

Soon through the land the cry of war was heard,
The clash and clangour of contending steel,
The war-horn, and the oath-fermented word,
The chargers' neighing, and the rattling wheel
Of chariots over fields of slain, and weal

Of conquering ire; anon, the moan of pain
And anguish filled the air—the last appeal
To arms swelled on the breeze as day did wane,
And eve in sombre robes stole o'er the battle plain.

VII.

Night brought not slumber; and the warriors' din
Waked from his orient cradle tardy day;
Then did the strife renewed at morn begin,
And wearied not until the evening grey
With streaks of lingering light faded away.
Then fire-trailed slaughter with a bloody lust
Spread through the Huns confusion and dismay;
For purblind Fate with its unerring thrust
Hymyr the dauntless chief laid grovelling in the dust.

VIII.

'Tis awful when we see the mighty fall,
When o'er the boast and dread of empires, earth
In silence casts its unemblazoned pall,
And the brave heart that once a country's worth
In valour, pride, and love maintained, to mirth
Of drum and laughter shall awake no more:
The cruel shaft of Death thus maketh dearth
Our joys, so that our spirits fain would soar
Unto those life-spent souls that beckon from heaven's door.

IX.

If that there be beyond the goal of earth
Another land where souls in union meet,
If in the abyss of death we find a birth
Where joys eternal life-lorn spirits greet,
Then are the terrors that entoil the feet
Of Time but phantoms fretted with despair,
And all our sorrows here a bitter-sweet
That makes delicious those rapt pleasures there
Where Hope can enter not, and Love is ever fair.

X.

Soon pride was full within the conqueror's breast,
And spleen made sick each haughty foeman's heart;
For on the blood-stained wold the trunkless crest
Of their great chieftain lay, with Grief athwart
The harnessed corse; then did veiled Mercy start
With pity from the brave Locrinus' soul;
For woman wept, and wantonly did part
With those translucent pearls that lovers dole
To Death for sweet Love's sake to buy back that it stole.

XI.

She was a princess stolen from her home,
The land of amber tresses and blue eyes,

Where Albis' tawny waters gurgling roam
Through valleys that do vie with paradise;
Where summer's sun luxuriously supplies
The loveliest charms that any land can boast;
Where beauteous day in variant splendour dies,
And snow-capped mountains, tinted with a host
Of heaven's ambient shades, in dizzy heights are lost.

XII.

A white robe scarcely half enwrapped the maid,
Laying the fountains of her bosom bare;
Her suppliant lips, and wondering eyes betrayed
A heart o'erwhelmed with fear and hope's despair.
Upon her snowy shoulders clustering hair
Fell down like wavy beams of golden light,
And beauty's cunning art strove everywhere
To waken love to ravish with delight
Desire, whose keenest sense was hallowed by the sight.

XIII.

Where is the man that dares to gaze on love,
When he beholds her in her pristine grace,
And conjure not impassioned words to move
The sympathy that beameth in her face?
Rapture of soul, and ecstasy will chase

His amorous thoughts, till at love's pleasant goal
He panting faints, self-vanquished by the grace
Love's vision made so luscious to his soul
When uncurbed passions swelled as seas that foam and roll.

XIV.

So loved the Loegrian king: with tender speech
He bade the captive maid approach in peace,
And say if such a love as his could reach
Her soul, and with a silent yea increase
His new-felt joy. As when loud thunders cease
To terrify, and south winds fan a calm,
Soft shadows gather in an argent fleece
Upon the sky's blue mirror; so the balm
Of his own words his soul o'ershadowed like a palm.

XV.

As the pale water lily droops its head,
And green weeds frosted with the pearly spray
Entangle it, so seemed the blue-eyed maid
As with a mein distraught she did essay
In terror's timorous accents to allay
The fears of hope that filled Locrinus' breast.
Then with a fervour that brooks not delay
They placed their lips to lips, and each carressed
As when love's bond is full, and hearts are truly blest.

XVI.

Now, to their souls none of earth's dreams were dull,
The flowers of peace were strewed on their life's way,
To them all passing things were beautiful;
For youth's aspiring hope maintained its sway.
For them Time wreathed with each revolving day
A garland decked with many a jocund hour;
For them, their smiles, their lips, love's looks obey
As fancy with some pleasure-finding power
Builds for their faithful hearts a rich love-trellised bower.

XVII.

How sweet is love, that doth life's griefs distil,
When souls ecstatic blush and bloom with joy,
When lips blend sweetly till earth's fears are still,
And hope's elixir makes the spirit coy!
Ah me! who can with pleasures so employ
Vain-fruitful days that sorrow lacks a reign,
Sorrow that doth with poisonous draughts destroy
The springs of holy passion in the fane
Of our sublimest thoughts in Time's expansive main?

XVIII.

Time's tongue lisps faintly ere it perisheth
In endless night, the doom of destiny,

Where life and love are close inhumed by death,
And all entrancing pleasures cease to be.
Day after day, year after year we see
Man sacrificed in hecatombs to gloom,
Obedient unto Nature's dire decree,
An inane offering to the silent tomb
Where bides nor love nor hope the darkness to illume.

XIX.

Alas! dark clouds these lovers' lives o'erspread:
For jealousy made black with blighting breath
The lucent phantoms each so late had wed,
And doomed its glories to a flickering death.
Despair and bitter chagrin lurked beneath
The gauzy robes of their fond heart's day-dreams,
Dreams whose ephemeral beauties Love doth wreathe
To garland Time, so that the present seems
A pledge of future bliss absorbed in heavenly beams.

XX.

In years of plastic youth Locrinus wooed
A Cornish princess, Lady Guendoline,
Who proudly promised him the hand he sued,
And deigned imperiously to be his queen.
Soon absence proved his amorous heart had been

The dupe to artifice and cunning wiles;
For true love ne'er had shed its rays serene,
Or sanctified their troths with faithful smiles,
Or laid upon their lips the kiss that hate beguiles.

XXI.

Proud was the father of this haughty maid,
Ruthless in war, and mighty in the chase;
His rage the fiercest of his foes dismayed,—
A giant chieftain of a giant race,
Corineus named: his will towered o'er disgrace;
A kindly friend, a fierce avenging foe
Who champed his ire till in his rugged face
Anger stood rampant, and the lambent glow
Of his impassioned will caught flame from fires below.

XXII.

Whenas Locrinus broke his erst-made troth,
Which, when by messengers the maid's sire heard,
He and his knights made glamour in their wrath,
And pledged the gods in wine their vengeful word
War, they cried, war on him who basely blurred
The fair escutcheon of their chief; a knave
Who durst dishonour thus their sovran lord,
By sharing half his throne with one a slave—
Then did they swear to slay him who such insult gave.

XXIII.

Corineus when on bloody vengeance bent,
Was as a cloud that in the eastern sky
Lowers gloomily o'er earth with wrath intent,
A sure presage that awful storms are nigh
Pregnant with lightnings that do terrify.
His locks were grizzled, and his lofty brow
By age was furrowed, and his eagle eye
Was cold and piercing, charged with hate enow
To guide without remorse death's desolating plough.

XXIV.

Proud like a statue set on high he stood;
His mien majestic as becometh kings,
His veins well charged with that swift-flowing blood
That floods to fire and flame; whose passion brings
In every mirrored thought the hideous wings
Of death-trailed lust like night extended spread
In jaundiced shadows o'er life's pleasant springs.
His knotted thews like coiling serpents wed
The isthmus of his soul, the pillar of his head.

XXV.

Ill boding terrors in the Loegrian's breast
Made sick the heart with many a fancied fear;

But still Love sacrified to his behest
The votive offering of a sigh or tear.
The infuriate chief in war's array drew near
Boiling with wild tempestuous rage,
Urged to revenge by frenzied bard and seer,
Embittered by the doubts that oft engage
The thoughts in ireful breasts on life's grief-trodden stage.

XXVI.

Frustrated hopes, and unfulfilled desires
Make pale with livid fears youth's damask hue,
As secret flames from doubt's deep hidden fires
To ashes burn the joys that once seemed true.
When parting sorrows damp the hopes like dew
And whet the silent tears that well from shame,
Sad are the souls that some love-phantom sue
Till peace forlorn assumes that mouldering name
Which calls the body dust, and breath eternal flame.

XXVII.

I fain would learn if after death we be
The essence of divine desire and love
Clothed in the robes of immortality.
If that our souls, in regions far above
The visions of mankind, do live and move

Dismantled of the flesh, like gods supreme,
Dowered with the myriad joys that are thereof.
If in death's fathomless abyss the gleam
Of life eternal meet Time's life-defined extreme.

XXVIII.

Like a swift hurricane Corineus came
Scourging the Alban lands with fire and blood,
Until in Trinovant his awful name
Swept like a pestilence, or dreadful flood
That spreads dismay, and death, and solitude
Through fertile fields, and many a homestead hearth
Where love maintained its sway, however rude
The tongues that uttered its sweet strains of mirth
Mid laughter blithe and full that never dreams of dearth.

XXIX.

Secure from danger, and impending woes
In shepherd's cot Locrinus hid his bride,
Reporting o'er the land that in the throes
Of labouring love the queenly mother died.
How burns the soul when mighty griefs deride
The bitter pangs that make us more than slaves!
How desolate is worldly pomp and pride
To minds that in those streams for ever lave
Where sorrow drowns our hopes till love make life a grave!

XXX.

Supreme in hate, reinless his uncurbed will,
The blood-words of revenge still on his lips,
He bade the Loegrian king his troth fulfil,
Or he with his true sword would life eclipse.
As when a tumid cloud that wraps the tips
Of lofty hills, dimming the radiant light
That dying day in vermeil splendour drips
In liquid gold, clears till each purple height
Silvered with pallid hues looks bright though all is night;

XXXI.

So with Locrinus: by compulsion dire
He wedded with the Lady Guendoline.
Then sank his heart at Hate's impervious pyre
As hope waxed pale, robed in the mystic sheen
Of spectral pleasures that so late had been
In the exhaustless treasures of his soul.
Lives there an antidote to love?—I ween
Not e'en an amulet that can control
Its eddying and flow, its surge and billowy roll.

XXXII.

'Tis sad to see in holy wedlock joined
Hands, when the hearts antipathies divide,

When sacred vows from paradise purloined
By lying tongues, are uttered side by side
Fair in the front of God him to deride;
When mutual ends thus blent in rivalry
With mouldering years, and faded hopes have died,
A desolation of remorse shall be
The portion of their souls throughout eternity.

XXXIII.

And thus were wed two hearts that knew not love,
Hearts teeming with the floods of bitter hate,
Earth-bound for concord, but the bond above
By discord rent, for Love's obsequious fate.
A life consumed by fires that ne'er abate,
Love's hate-impassioned enmity, and all
The dark antipathies that fearful wait
The vengeful hour when with its stinging gall
Hate yields to hatē and hope at death's grim festival.

XXXIV.

In secret cot amid the tranquil vales,
Where streamlets flow, and purple mountains rise,
The fair Esyllt her faithful spouse bewails,
And dreams of happiness in ether skies.
How vain that dream with all its sympathies!

How very vain the hope of after bliss !
Here souls are meted out their destinies ;
And of all destinies the sweetest is
A kiss ; for there's no world, I fear, succeeding this.

XXXV.

Away from hatred and disdaining eyes
She weans her heart of many a worldly care ;
Imbued with hope her daily task she plies,
Nor pines in solitude, but yearns to share
Her love's first-fruits, should heaven the blossom spare,
With love and all its trancing sweets ; for she
Tear-nourishes the bud her true love bare
Unto her lord, unblossomed though it be,
Yet it shall bloom to flower life's swift decaying tree.

XXXVI.

Delicious fruit of love's inblent desires !
Ecstatic joys pregnated in the womb !
Flowers of the passion of some mutual fires
Formed in the soundless depths of gloom
To deck the earth and putrify the tomb.
Such are we : spectres on the expanseless sea
Of Time, the incarnation of the fume
Of Doubt and Hope, till by divine decree
We on death's shore resume our old divinity.

XXXVII.

Our old divinity!—Are we divine
Who, day by day bathed in Time's lucent light,
Must slumber ever in that caverned mine
Where all's oblivion and eternal night;
Where is nor any joy, nor pleasant sight,
Nor beauties luminous wherewith our eyes
Are charmed, nor any terrors to affright
Our body's soul, pensile uncertainwise
Between Elysian fields and earth's sure paradise?

XXXVIII.

Seven weary years concealed from haunts of men
The mother languished for that joyous day
When death should on Corineus frown; for then
Her hopes, slow mouldering to decay,
With love's new joys should haste to cast away
The memory of ancient woes with life
That ravishes and feasts on its new prey,
For grief's pavilioned light with splendour rife
Oft silvers passing clouds of once o'erwhelming strife.

XXXIX.

Meanwhile, on hunting expeditions feigned,
Locrinus saw the mistress of his love,

Whose fainting heart new ties to earth had chained ;
The bond was heaven's, a dowry from above.
Sweet harbinger of peace ! who durst reprove
Such fate that had so great a boon bestowed
On them ? Their souls with increased ardour strove
To breathe on high the gratitude that flowed
In fancy's boundless stream where myriad phantoms glowed.

XL.

When Autumn's torch that burns the years away
Cast o'er the vernal woods its sickly hue
Of livid red, and when the short-lived day
Pined for the summer's sun, and morning's dew
Decked not the fields as it was wont to do,
Then winged Corineus' soul immutable
Unto that land whose bourne death hides from view,
Whose shores are washed by souls in spell
Of vacancy or sleep, or hopes no tongue can tell.

XLI.

Mindful of former wrongs the amorous king
Straightway divorced the haughty Guendoline ;
And from her woodland home in pomp did bring
His faithful, loved Esyllt to be his queen :
Her whose dear life for many years had been

A sacrifice to her absorbing love,
The damask of whose cheeks old years had seen
Glow with full passion when new vows did move
Her soul to seek its mate with arts that spring thereof.

XLII.

Ere yet Locrinus from sequestered vale
Called his lorn wife to share his royal crown,
The slighted Guendoline had heard the tale
How Esyllt lived her rival envy down.
But she to callous ways by hatred grown
Dissembled her fierce wrath and direful will
Till she should with her sole begotten son,
Madoc, destroy her traitorous spouse, and fill
The Loegrian land with woe, and queen and daughter kill.

XLIII.

Whenas by spies in Trinovant she heard
Her ancient rival shared Locrinus' throne,
In jealousy she seized the avenging sword
To claim the regal sceptre as her own,
Or till her son should be to manhood grown.
Then all the giants' sons prepared for war,
Eager Locrinus should in blood atone
Their sovereign's wrongs: thus did the rising star
Of Esyllt's glory wane mid gathering clouds afar.

XLIV.

'Tis sad that bliss for time is seldom ours,
We who are heirs to many a hidden ill,
We whose frustrated joy in darkness dowers
The secret woe our lives inherit still.
For us new fears for ever rise to chill
The fervent trust that would our doubts consume;
In us the mystery of desire hath will
To fashion loves for nought but utter gloom,
And foiling hopes that chafe our spirits to the tomb.

XLV.

Who joyful bides the recompense of days
That treacherously hides within the folds of years?
Who strives to penetrate the future's ways
Without the spectre of dissolving fears
Passing where neither dawn nor twilight cheers
With hope the weary traveller on that road
Whose myriad byeways are kept green with tears?
Who so consumed with pleasure seeks the abode
Where souls are blent in airs, and flesh with mouldering sod?

XLVI.

Soon through the peaceful land spread civil strife
Whetted with lust of unrelenting rage.

The blood-dyed streams and moans of smitten life
Did not the hate of either foe assuage;
But rather ardour gave to their dire wage.
Nor did War stay his pestilent career;
But sweeping on, supported by its page
Famine, mid wailings, scattered far and near
The tares of woe from Death's tear-perforated bier.

XLVII.

An arrow by a Cornish archer sped
Pierced to his very heart the Loegrian king:
Then did the mourners weep their sovereign dead,
And all the land was filled with sorrowing.
From north to south did these sore tidings bring
Dismay and anguish to each faithful breast:
And Grief spread over all his sombre wing,
When unto Trinovant by wrathful hest
Came malice-mantled death an uninvited guest.

XLVIII.

Sorrows and troubles gather year by year
Like death-mounds on the desert plain of life,
Kept ever green by every secret tear
That swells unbidden in our breasts 'gainst strife.
Death armed with Grief as with a keen-edged knife

Wounds Memory until regrets do flow
With desolating flood where hopes are rife,
And we with sinking hearts desire to go
Where endless peace absorbs the fleeting hours below.

XLIX.

Revenge and Hate, and all the powers that move
Natures of base condition to conspire
Against the varied complements of love,
Raged in the Cornish princess' breast with ire
Fiercer than storms surcharged with deadly fire.
With these she strove to force to bitter death
The luckless queen; for jealousies most dire
With undissembled wrath did Discord wreathe,
While Calumny would quench life's latest struggling breath.

L.

Then Guendoline in rage insatiate
Bade Esyllt and Sabrina to be brought
To her, that she herself might seal their fate,
And mock the tears her jealous hatred wrought;
For Esyllt for her lord was sore distraught,
And hoped that death her burning griefs would pall
Ere life from sympathy fresh springs had caught.
Full well she knew these ruthless conquerors all
Would make o'er their spent lives a bloody festival.

LI.

Then with revenge still seething in her soul,
In cruel glee these venomed words she saith,
'Thou base-born wretch, of life's most bitter bowl
Thou'lt drink the very dregs even unto death.
Get hence, and yield to nether airs thy breath,
Thou and thy daughter, for this land no more
Shall weep, for desolation burtheneth
Her grievously unto her chalk-cliffed shore
Whereon the breakers dash amid the tempest's roar.

LII.

'I hate thee, slave; and but for thee my life
Had known fulfilment to a haughty love,
And yet I never loved, nathless the strife
Of jealousy in me began to move
When thou a rival to my wish didst prove.
Get hence; unto yon stream a sacrifice
I yield ye; may the avenging gods above,
If the oblation please them in somewise,
Thrust your polluted souls headlong from paradise.'

LIII.

Then Esyllt turning, meekly to her said,
'Princess, if I in aught have done thee wrong,

Surely, the gods have heaped upon my head
Vengeance requiting thee: for, since among
This people I have come, the weary song
Of sorrow or of woe hath been my theme.
Yet in that land whither I'm borne along
I trow great pleasures shall upon my spirit gleam,
Else earthly love to me hath been a saddening dream.

LIV.

'But ere I pass beyond that dismal stream—
Embracing her the sole fruit of our love—
Where night shuts out dawn's rosy beam
From that dark land and spectre-haunted grove,
Know that my heart did always faithful prove
Unto my slaughtered lord; and if to thee
Evil hath come, it came from those above,
The gods have measured it—not such as we—
And what they mete to man such is his destiny.'

LV.

Then did the Conqueress bid her warriors take
The widowed queen and her Sabrina fair,
And cast them in the angry stream to slake
Her yet unsatiated hate's despair.
Thus did these twain life's bitter chalice share,

Meekly obedient to the high gods' will;
For well they knew death endeth all our care,
And all must thuswise soon or late fulfil
Their dreary life's day-task up Time's untrodden hill.

LVI.

As oft the setting sun at evening laves
In all the splendours of its lustrous light,
So sank to rest 'neath Severn's glassy waves,
Sabrina and Esyllt, to that drear night
Where death despoiling life with venomed spite
Burthens the wingèd treasures of our souls
With blank oblivious years, that phantom spright
That flutters fearlessly in our control
Till Death quaffs all the draught and breaks the crystal bowl.

LVII.

Like a strange meteor did they pass away
To taste the pleasures of their spirits' sphere;
They passed like sunshine on a summer's day
'Neath silvery waves like purest crystal clear.
Like dreams that glide before our minds' eyes here
They passed unto that undiscovered land
Where fearful things dispel the very fear,
And love, deflowered by Death's most treacherous hand,
Sinks in the waste of years as in a quickening strand.

LIFE AND LOVE;

AN ECHO.

HUSH, my heart! the hours are stealing
Hours are stealing
Life from every thought of earth,
And o'er all a gentle feeling
Gentle feeling
Glides to whisper of new birth,
Birth to life that is immortal,
Life that is immortal,
Far beyond heaven's purple portal,
Yon heaven's purple portal,
Where the angels wait the soul
That on Death's dark wings with healing,
Wings with healing,
'Mid celestial pæans pealing,
Pæans pealing,
Floats beyond Time's drear control.

Hark, the pæans loud are pealing
As the hours of life are stealing
O'er my soul with gentle feeling,
  As within heaven's purple portal
  I am robed with life immortal.
Life immortal.

Hush, my heart! thy life's fulfilling
Life's fulfilling
  Love with every passing breath,
And its future dream is thrilling
Dream is thrilling
  All my soul to welcome death,
Death that maketh love immortal,
Maketh love immortal,
Far beyond heaven's purple portal,
Yon heaven's purple portal,
  Where is pure inspiring love,
Where the angel-souls are telling
Souls are telling
To the spirits that are willing
That are willing.
  The completed bliss thereof.

Hark, the angel-souls are telling
To my heart its love's fulfilling,
And its earthly dream is thrilling
All within that inner portal
As I am robed with love immortal.

Love immortal.

ATOMS.

SUNLIGHT and twilight, darkness and sheen,
Days that shall come and days that have been,
Fashion their splendours to love such as mine
Pure as the light of a summer sunshine.
Rosebud and blossom,
Tendril and leaf,
Blushing and blooming
For days that are brief,
Making the soul full of pleasure divine,
Quaffing the draughts of celestial wine.
These be the atoms that mingle with fears
The life that to love the spirit endears.

Sorrow and laughter, passion and pain,
Ever fulfilling their worthless gain,

Fashioning life for the span of a breath
Under the shadow of mocking death,
Waiting and wanting
Glorified years,
Culling the sweetness
Of sympathy's tears,
Filling the soul with a worldly disdain
Ere ever it wake to its heavenly reign.
These be the atoms that mingle with fears
The life that to love the spirit endears.

A SONG.

WHY seek ye a peace in this valley of doubt?
Why seek ye a joy where true joy bideth not?
O come where the houris of heaven shall shout
In praise of the pastime love's sweet ways begot!

Abide ye the time when a smile and a tear
Commingled in peace with a mellow-toned laughter,
Shall teach you the pleasure that liveth not here,
But slumbers for each in the hidden hereafter;

When the songs of the houris in rapture awaking
The dead from their couches of water and earth,
Shall bring to your spirits the peace that partaking
Of gives to your pleasures a heavenly birth.

Then, then the sweet songs of the beauties of heaven,
Shall thrill the love-cords that entwine round your heart,
And Peace in its pinions by perfumed winds driven
Shall wing round your throne till your sorrows depart.

TO AUGUSTA;

ON SEEING HER HAT DECKED WITH ROSES.

I.

A LOVE-BUD decked with roses,
With cheeks as blooming bright,
And eyes whose hue is liquid blue
Our love and first delight.
Let suns make sweet the springtime,
And halcyon airs combine
To waft from thee, my beauty,
Life's winter frost and rime.

II.

Fair love-bud crowned with roses
Despoiled of every thorn,
Each winsome smile doth life beguile
For thee, fruit of love's morn.

Let roses bud in springtime,
  And blow till summer-days
Entwine thy heart with pleasures,
  And wreathe thy brow with bays.

III.

First pledge of love long plighted,
  Be all thine hours as gay,
And full of sun as is this one,
  This southern April day.
Let skies of liquid azure
  Encanopy thy youth,
And golden evenings whisper
  Thy morrow's smiling ruth.

IV.

O could I hope, my love-bud,
  Thy life would be as free
From worldly cares, and sorrow's tares,
  As we would have it be.
Let tears bereave all sadness
  Of every secret pain,
Our hopes shall steal their glory
  From summer suns again.

V.

We, father and sweet mother,
Whose mingled love thou art,
In love's desire, with love conspire
Thy coming griefs to thwart.
Let grief usurp the sceptre
Of thy heart's latest love,
New fashioned joys shall gather
To crown the fruits thereof.

VI.

My love-bud decked with roses
With which thy beauty vies,
Thy playful ways in infant days
Make pastime ere spring dies.
Let suns make bright the summer,
And halcyon hopes combine
To wreathe thy life with pleasure
Stolen from heaven's holy treasure,
As time with dancing measure
Quaffs to thy peace in wine.

VII.

O love-branch that hath trellissed
Round thy mother's heart and mine,

May suns arise in winter skies
  Till death our loves entwine.
Yet, while life's in its springtime,
  Shalt thou, my fairest dove,
Be garlanded with olive
  And all the flowers of love.

UNDER THE BEECH-TREES.

I.

PLEDGE me the gift of ripened love,
  Pledge me the joy of life-in-time,
    Pledge me the boon of earthly bliss
    In a kiss
Under these beeches; as above
  The sweet songs of this leafy clime
    Echo a thrilling melody
    That will be
Full of the ardour of love's breath,
Sweet as the rapt words that love saith
Reft of the fear that perisheth
Hard by the sepulchre of death,
  When souls awakening to celestial bliss
  Welcome their kindred with a joy like this :—
[*They kiss.*

II.

Pledged now, and plighted are our vows,
  Plighted and pledged for earthly hours,
    Plighted and sealed with heavenly bliss
    In a kiss
Under these beeches, on whose boughs
  A feathered choir pipes Love's sweet powers
    Full of a swelling harmony
    That shall be
When years are lost in wasted breath,
When earthly passion perisheth,
When all that Love would say he saith
Close by the sepulchre of death
  As thy fair soul and mine in endless bliss
  Pledge earthly love in heaven with joy like this :—
[*They kiss.*

A HYMN TO FRIENDSHIP.

In youth and age, the bond of years
With gentle current glides away
Beyond the source of sorrow's tears,
Beyond the haven of life's day.

In every thought, in every doubt,
A secret grace imprinted lies,
Till all the passions of earth's rout
Have swept us to our destinies.

The broken reed, the empty bowl
Shall then full powers from heaven assume,
When o'er the stream of death, the soul
Is borne through shade's benighted gloom.

Where'er the joys of youth shall greet
My age's memory and pain,
Let truth consorting friendship, meet
With peace our sail outspread again.

The prow of my life's bark is driven
  Against the rugged cliffs of hate ;
But still my stable trust is heaven,
  And faith enduring in my fate.

I faint not for the shrill applause
  That heralds through the world my fame :
I faint not for caprice's laws
  That blasts or builds an earthly name.

I pause not in my journey here
  For weak, regretful, worthless praise ;
I pause but in this vale to cheer
  The pilgrim struggling through life's ways.

I wait with palpitating heart
  The magic gift bestowed by God
On mortals, that its social art
  May soothe me in this frail abode.

It is not art : 'tis heaven's choice gift
  From paradise by cherubs borne
Upon their silvery wings to lift
  Our souls from paths unkempt, forlorn.

'Tis part of God instilled in few
To sanctify the portion blest,
And fill with heaven's refreshing dew
The hour of toil ere evening's rest.—

The eve of life, the night of time
Sinks slowly 'neath the western sea,
And bears our souls with solemn chime
On, into dark eternity.

In sunshine and in shade and grief,
Sublimer hopes entrance our lives;
For, though the bonds of life be brief,
We cherish not its fleshly gyves.

O secret spell, O dreary dream
That waits upon our last sad hour,
O fearful, dreadful sullen stream
Swollen with floods of sorrow's dower.

O moment still, O moment claspt
Within the arms of conquering death,
You bear us to a land that past
A thousand times with failing breath.

Still grant us, heaven, that gift sublime
That makes us love with pleasant calm;
Give Friendship's bliss for fleeting time
And lull our fears with its sweet balm.

AN ADIEU.

FAREWELL! and when life's tempests gather
To cloud the hours of hope's repose,
Entwine thy faith with love's rapt pleasure
Till doubt with peace entrancèd glows.

Farewell! I must not say for ever,
I know we twain must surely meet,
If not on earth in that bright region
Where Love and Time twine round God's feet.

Farewell! securer joys await us
Than those which fill each troubled breast;
For we, and all, shall meet in heaven
Where Love hath peace and endless rest.

EXTASIA DREAMETH.

BLUSHING as blushes the red rose,
Damask mingled with pale,
Lovely head in a languid repose
Under a leafy veil,
Under the shade of the willows
Drooping over the stream,
Fanned by the sweetest breeze that blows,
Beauty sleepeth to dream.

Blushing as blushes the red rose,
Tinted by fairy art,
Cheeks that bloom when the life glows
With a delighted heart,
Beautiful peace that heaven bestows
Over thy placid face,
Linger with thee till thy soul knows
Peace in its holiest place.

Blushing as blushes the red rose,
Beauty lieth asleep
Close by the bank where the brook flows
Slowly, solemn and deep.
Emblem of Time ! through life's billows
Time steals on in a dream,
Restless ever, onward it goes
Like to this limpid stream.

Blushing as blushes the red rose,
Warmed by the summer's sun,
Beauty lies, slumbering away those
Dreams of a grief begun,
Full of hope's sorrowful heart-woes,
Lulled into sleep with tears,
Here, on her couch where the moss grows,
Visions mock at her fears.

Blushing as blushes the red rose,
Eyes fringed with silken beams,
Eyes whose beseeching gaze shews
Love in thy nature teems.

Thou to whose love my worn soul owes
  All its treasure's increase.
Slumber, my beauty, till night close
  Round thee its wings of peace.

Blushing as blushes the red rose,
  Rose-tint or lily-pale,
Lovely head in a languid repose
  Under a weeping veil.
Beauty asleep 'neath those willows
  Fretting the glassy stream;
Beautiful peace on her face glows—
  Dream on, Extasia, dream.

A HYMN TO THE MOON.

A REVEL.

POET.

HAIL to thee, Goddess of the skies,
That with thy pallid brow inspires
Thoughts with the magic spell of peace,
And Hopes with never-dying fires!
High on thy throne in heaven thou crown'st
With silvery halos purple night,
And o'er the lofty pine-trees' crests
Glid'st onward ever in thy flight.

CHORUS OF THE MAIDENS.

Mother of love, queen of the night,
Praised be thy beauty, praised thy might,
Under the lustre of thine eyes
We dream of glorious paradise.

Mother and maiden, virgin and bride,
Shine on us, shine in all thy pride.

CHORUS OF THE YOUTHS.

Mistress of bliss, mother and queen,
Seeing our loves, and being seen,
Make our maids true, make our hearts light,
Goddess and maid, queen of the night.

SEMICHORUS.

Queen of the night, chaste mother shine
On us the light of love divine.

POET.

Chaste queen who from thine azure home
  Look'st down with smiling wan-like face,
Instilling with ingenuous love
  The kiss of heaven's sublime-born grace.
The glow of thine entrancing gaze
  With transient pleasure fills my soul,
And holy quiet joy impels
  My life's dear wish beyond control.

CHORUS OF THE MAIDENS.

Praised be thy beauty, praised thy might,
Goddess and maid, bride of the night.
The myriad sweets of paradise.
Flood in the splendour of thine eyes.
Maiden and mother, virgin-bride,
Shine on us, queen, in all thy pride.

CHORUS OF THE YOUTHS.

Queen of the shadows, queen of the night,
Virgin and bride in robes bedight
Lustrous and wan, of glistening sheen,
Hear us who laud thee lovely queen.

SEMICHORUS.

Mother of love, chaste goddess shine
On our dark souls thy light divine.

POET.

Goddess of night, cold, stately queen,
To thee a sacred hymn I raise ;

For thee the music of my soul
  Swells with the flame of silent praise.
Thou shinest through my leafy bower
  In mirthful, silent, mystic sheen,
And strew'st with arabesque the floor
  Of pearly dew and softest green.

CHORUS OF THE MAIDENS.

Beautiful Moon! bride of the night,
Pour down on us thy liquid light.
Lovers are we whom fair youths woo,
Make thou our loves faithful and true.
Here, 'neath the oak's outspreading bough,
We'll dancing laud thee, goddess, now;
Under thy full bright-beaming face
We'll sing thy power with music's grace;
With timbrels and with cymbals we
Will worship, sandalled-goddess, thee.
Goddess and mother, throned above,
Love us, and guard our virgin love,
Shine on us, queen, in all thy pride,
Mother and maid, virgin and bride.

CHORUS OF THE YOUTHS.

Goddess of night! lovers we be
Dreaming under the acorn tree;
Fruitful help-mates grant us, O queen,
For faithful lovers we have been.
Beautiful-maid with beaming hair,
Hear, and answer our midnight prayer.

SEMICHORUS.

Queen, from thine empyrean shine
With all the light of love divine,
And from thy bow an arrow speed,
A messenger of holy meed.

POET.

Thy trancing gaze imbues with light
  The cloud-bound visions of my love,
And with thy glowing beauty wane
  The sombre doubts that are thereof.
For thee all nature finds a tongue,
  For thee the liquid strains of song
Waft on the evening's fluttering breeze
  Through echoing forests borne along.

CHORUS OF THE MAIDENS.

Lady of love, lady of light,
Mother of joy, queen of the night,
Under thy fair front's radiant gaze
We, dancing, chaunt our hymn of praise.
Virgin and bride, goddess and maid,
Come to us, come, our love to aid.

CHORUS OF THE YOUTHS.

Mistress of dreams, mother of bliss,
Teach our lovers thy chaste-like kiss;
Make their hearts pure with thy chaste light,
Goddess, and stately queen of night.

SEMICHORUS.

Queen of the night, fair goddess shine
With all the light of love divine;
Season man's woe with timely mirth,
And fruitful make the labouring earth.

POET.

For thee the nightingale doth pipe
Its lute-like notes in summer-tide;

And the lorn lovers pine alone
For thee the night's ethereal bride.
Long wooed by gods, a virgin still,
Chaste sovereign of the amorous stars
Who suppliant ever worship thee
Unmindful of old jealous wars.

CHORUS OF THE MAIDENS.

Mother and maid, queen of the night,
Hail to thy beauty, hail to thy might,
Thrice blest is she on whom a beam
Of thy pure light in sleep doth gleam.
From thee well joys of strange device—
Virtuous love of nameless price.
Under the oak-tree's leafy shade
Thee we worship, mother and maid.
Love, and the light of love art thou,
Beautiful queen, succour us now.

CHORUS OF THE YOUTHS.

Lady of love, mother and queen,
Seeing our loves, and being seen,

Give us, O give us faithful wives
To charm our lone and barren lives.
Hearken, mother, virgin and bride,
And grant the wish our hearts confide.
Lady of love, mistress of night,
Fill our souls with thy sacred light.

SEMICHORUS.

Queen of the stars, chaste goddess shine
On us the light of love divine.

POET.

Adown the lengthy vistas steal
  Thy soft benignant lucent rays
To chase the phantoms of the shade
  To dark untrodden silent ways;
As floating over hill and vale
  Thy beauty beams with placid joy,
And night-winds whisper to my heart
  The peace that wastes in life's alloy.

CHORUS OF THE MAIDENS.

Shine on us, shine, O lovely Moon!
Mistress of months, grant us a boon

Fruitful wives, and mothers make us
With thy full powers all luminous.
Give us brave sons, and daughters fair,
Thewed and supple, this is our prayer,
Make thou our daughters lissom for love,
And ripe for the joys that are thereof.
Goddess and maid, virgin and queen,
Shine on our midnight festal scene.

CHORUS OF THE YOUTHS.

Queen of the night, thy vigils we keep
Chasing away the burthen of sleep.
Thou art our hope, O pensive Moon,
Hear us, and grant this heavenly boon,
Make our wives faithful, make them fair,
This is our hope, this is our prayer.

SEMICHORUS.

Goddess and queen, chaste virgin shine,
And fill our souls with light divine.

POET.

Thou guardian of the sombre night,
Thou goddess of the wooded glade,

Thou queen of every fairy throng
That revels 'neath this beechen shade,
On thee the elfs with mournful cry
Call, lest the dawn their spell should break;
To thee the ghostly things of earth
Their mystic sacrifices make.

CHORUS OF THE MAIDENS.

Mother of seasons, thee we hail;
Maiden and queen, lovely and pale,
Shine on us now, and quicken our loves,
Strewing with shadows these sacred groves.
Balm our lips with the dew that is
Full of delicious ecstasies.
Lady of light, virginal bride,
Shine on us now, shine in thy pride.
All-fruitful wives with thy love-power
Make us, O queen, when love shall flower;
For maidens chaste and pure are we
Who singing praise and call on thee.

CHORUS OF THE YOUTHS.

Come to us now, come to our aid,
Virgin and bride, mother and maid;

Lady of love, queen of the night
Grant us the boon of love's delight.
Mother of months and slumbering hours,
Mother of fruits and fruitful flowers,
Virgin and queen, goddess and spouse,
To thee we pay our midnight vows.
Hear, and answer, lady of night,
Mistress of months, maidens' delight.

SEMICHORUS.

Queen of shadows, goddess of groves,
Fill our soul with chaste-like loves.

POET.

For thee the nymphs and sylphs on streams
Their mystic vigils alway keep;
For thee the gentle rippling waves
Make music on the silent deep;
For thee the murmuring trees do sigh;
The leaves lisp softly prayer to thee;
All nature, charmed with thy wan joys,
Extols thy chaste divinity.

CHORUS OF THE MAIDENS.

Hail to thee, Huntress; hail to thee, queen;
Shine on our midnight festive scene.
Fruitful mother of fecund earth
Mingle with love our virgin mirth,
Give us the boon of maidens' lives,
And make us faithful, fruitful wives.
Mother of months, grant us a boon,
Wives and mothers O make us soon,
Then we'll praise thee with song and dance
When wedded joys our loves entrance.
With cymbals loud our virgin throng
Shall laud thee, lady, here among
The wooded dales and trellised vines
Wherethrough thy lambent glory shines.
Hearken, mother, grant us this boon;
Hear and bestow, O pensive Moon;
For we pure maidens e'er have been,
And true of heart, O puissant queen.

CHORUS OF THE YOUTHS.

Mother of shadows, in robes bedight
Glowing with pallid silvery light;

Beautiful maid with golden hair,
Hear and answer our youthful prayer.
Mete us the boon of life and love,
And all the pleasures that are thereof.
Give us, O give us our heart's desire,
And with rapt joys our loves inspire;
Maids pure hearted, and virgins fair,
Grant thou us our true loves to share;
Give these to us who pay thee vows,
Queen of the stars, and chaste as snows
That crown the brows of Apennine,
Grant us thy dower of love divine.
Hearken and hear, O lovely queen,
For faithful lovers we have been.

SEMICHORUS.

Thou whose breath is the pearly dew
Decking the lotus-leaf and rue,
Breathe a blessing from thy chaste soul,
And hold thy lovers in love's control,
And from thy throne of liquid sheen
Come down and kiss them, mighty queen.

POET.

Thou bride of night, thou goddess chaste,
Smile through thy veil of lucent sheen;
Thou monarch of the nocturn gloom,
Thou fair and fruitful maid serene,
Over the slumbering world O shed
The tranquil glow of peace supreme,
And melancholy with thy light
Shroud in the magic of a dream.

CHORUS OF THE MAIDENS.

Mother of all fair fruitful things,
And all that to thy bounty clings,
Fairy queen of the elfin streams,
Whereon thy sparkling glory gleams,
Through all the hours of silent night
Make full our amorous spirits' plight.
Queen of our revels, virgin queen,
Under our feet are fields of green
Strewed with the night-flowers full in bloom,
And perfumed by the fragrant broom,
Hereon we dance to thee our praise
Under thy mild and placid gaze.

Over our heads are fields of grey
Melting before the breath of day
Into sweet tears of glistening dew
Decking the rose, and hyacinth blue,
Mistress of months, maidens, and flowers,
And purple night's soft sandalled hours,
Make our love full, and its fruits fair,
By the sweet balm of thy cooling air.
This is our hope, O lady wan,
Ere o'er the hills cometh the dawn.
Hearken, and grant life's choicest boon
To us who hymn thy laud, O Moon.

CHORUS OF THE YOUTHS.

Shine, O goddess, with power divine;
Grant thou our prayers, give us a sign;
Make our wives fruitful; make them fair,
Virgins or wives, this is our prayer.
Maiden and queen, grant us life's boon,
We who hymn thy praises, O Moon.

SEMICHORUS.

Mother of months and dew-decked flowers;
Bride of the night whose sandalled hours

Tread the hills like a timorous fawn
Fearful of death with the coming dawn.
Hear us, O Bride, grant us love's boon
Who hymn thy praises, O pallid Moon!

UNCERTAINTY.

AN IMPROVISE.

SHALL I be smitten with death,
  Shall I be smitten with woe
When the sun arises on high
  With a bright crimson glow?
Shall I be stricken with death
  When the moon arises to shine?
Shall this my soul be smitten
  With a sorrow divine?

O, when the pain that falls sadly
  Pierceth the core of my heart,
Then through the tempests of years
  I shall pass, and depart!

O, how the thought chills my soul!
O, how the dream wastes my hope!
For the desires of life
That with breath shall elope.

God! if God be in shadow;
God! if God be in death;
Can God the Merciful hope for
The passing of life's fondest breath?

For, through the mists of the morrow
I see but a dreary gloom,
And through the faltering years
I see but the shade of the tomb.
Ever and ever desponding,
Ever made sick with my fears,
I chasten the clouds of my sorrow
With sad and uncertain years.
They gather and fall o'er my spirit
Like pleasure sore blighted with pain;
They fall and they fade like the evening
To brighten the morrow again.

O call me! O call me, ye spirits,
  Beyond the fair mountains of death;
For I see on the purple horizon
  The spectres of earthly breath.

I strive in wrath with my passions,
  I call upon God in my woe
To dull the ethereal splendour
  That over my weïrd thoughts glow.

I sink in the sadness of sorrow;
  I am lost in the clouds of despair;
But my love for the things that are present
  With smiles mocks my lorn spirit there.

The abyss of the future surrounds me,
  The depths of the night are in gloom,
Yet the phantom of Hope gathers round me
  As I slumber as if in the tomb.

O they part! O they part! all the glories
  That bind me with love to this earth;
They part; for the joy of Life's pleasures
  Made sear all my soul at its birth.

The soul—hath it birthright in sorrow?
The soul—hath it seasons for gain?
Bides my soul on the dismal to-morrow
To find resurrection in pain?
No—I die; we all die, and in dying,
With dire stricken breath
We yield both our souls and our bodies
To darkness eternal at death.

YEARS AGO!

O HOW she loved me years ago
When sunny hours embowered us,
When hopeful youth, its brightest glow
With dazzling grace empowered us.
But this you know
Was years ago.

But soon the breath of winter cold
Nipped my fair floweret in the bud:
Though years are young, that time is old
When my love loved me as I would,
Which was you know
Years, years ago.

The days soon passed mid smiles and tears,
Mid fruitful sorrow, pain, and anguish.
Yet for that love of by-gone years
My fainting soul shall ever languish,
Even, although
'Twas years ago.

O well she loved me years ago
When future hopes embowered us,
And pleasures shed the magic glow
That with rapt joy empowered us.
But this was so
Years, years ago.

Ah, fickle Time! ah, fickle heart!
Why thus soon change such joy to sorrow?
Why lend us Hope, then mock the part
That eagerly awaits the morrow?
That morrow—oh!
Years, years ago.

Ye know not grief whose loves are true,
Whose lips are warmed with faithful kisses;
For love's full heart requiteth you;
And of earth's joys the sweetest this is.
How sweet—I know
From years ago.

Love first caressed, then cast away
Stings deeper, far, than aspish bite,
And clouds the heart's own brightest ray
With gloomier shades than darkest night.
Such was my woe
Years, years ago.

Farewell, my love, my love no more
As you were once—years, years ago—
We'll meet, perhaps, upon that shore
Where Love assumes its brightest glow.
The radiant glow
Of years ago.

I know you loved me years ago
When future hopes embowered us,
And pleasures shed their wonted glow
As peace sublime empowered us,
Yes, it was so,
But—years ago.

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW.

To-day.

Wooed and wedded, O happy am I,
Heigh ho, happy.
This is the day of all my life,
Happiest, merriest, maiden and wife,
Heigh ho, heigh ho.
Under the light of my lover's eye
Basketh my heart's love deliciously,
Heigh ho, happy.
Flushed with the joys of my spirit's play,
Bright as the loveliest maying day,
Wreathed with the blossoms of Love's array,
I and my soul with pleasure are gay,
Jasmine or orange, leaflet or flower,
This is my life's most delicious hour,

This is the day when my soul is full
With a passionate peace unutterable,
Heigh ho, heigh ho.
For I've been wooed and wedded to wive,
On earth is no happier maid alive.
Heigh ho, happy.

TO-MORROW.

Wedded and wived a year am I,
Heigh ho, weary.
Now are the days of sorrow and strife,
Days that call me mother and wife,
Heigh ho, heigh ho.
Under the frown of my husband's eye
Sinketh my spirit's hope bitterly,
Heigh ho, weary.
Water, ye tears, my lorn bosom's woe!
Heartless and cold as the winter's snow
Now is the love that a year ago
Made my young heart with love's rapture glow.
Cypress and yew in the north wind's breath,
Whine the sad song of my early death!

O parched are my lips for that burning kiss
Which brought to my soul deleterious bliss,
Heigh ho, heigh ho,
That day whereon I was wedded to wive—
O God, that this day should see me alive!
Heigh ho, weary.

A SONG.

FOR MUSIC.

BEYOND the utmost power of sight,
To the land where the angels dwell,
My spirit sped on the wings of light;
'Twas a land that my soul knew well.
There the moon's bright rays pale shadows cast
On my dream of love that long had past.

Heaven's harps were thrilled by the seraph choir,
Love, love was the theme of their song:
Then I awaked with a hallowed ire,
For my spirit was with that throng,
As my first-love sang that sweet old theme
We sang together in life's sad dream.

LIFE.

LIFE comes to us mid pains and fears,
And e'er keeps fretting through all years;
It struggles hard to catch the breath
That it must yield to potent death;
It pauses here to feel the power
Of endless time with measured hour,
To see days stalk with silent tread
O'er lands made great with all its dead,
Where like a bark upon a sea
It helmless sights eternity,
And eager to make sure its shore
It urges on with double oar,—
With Faith and Doubt in every breath,
But to be swamped at last by death.

THE OLD, OLD STORY.

'Tis an old, old story:
How old? ah, who can tell?
Since the days when Time
Was wandering wild
Bereft of age's magic spell;
When angels were as we are,
If such as angels be,
When God was hewing days and years
Out of eternity;
When Beauty was not lovely
Since all heaven's race were fair;
For the trancing glow of holy grace
Was beaming everywhere.
Mayhap this story were it known
Makes sinless life a woe,
Perchance it makes the angels
Man's ever jealous foe.

Love made the heavens, and Love the earth;
Love crowned creation's wonder;
Love brings to man a timely birth,
And rends his joys in sunder.
But Love's my theme, and Love's my song,
And for it I shall still prolong
The hope that brought peace in my youth,
And gave me pastime in its ruth.
O sweet delicious tender joy,
That day Love lived without alloy.
The moments passed surcharged with passion,
Nor paused to hear Love's tale begun,
But glided on in the old fashion,
Whilst Love and I made pleasure one
Until the languid evening perse
Shut out the golden setting sun.
What Love's to-day 'twill be to-morrow;
Then wherefore tune my lyre to sorrow?
The chaplet Peace enwreathes my heart,
Therefore we twain made one that day
Are very loth in life to part
Unless from grief I borrow.
Then Love for years shall be my theme,
And Love's delicious joys my song

As down the smooth or ruffled stream
Of life my spirit's borne along.

In a golden sundown, by a lake,
Where trees their long lank shadows spread;
Within a still sequestered brake,
Where myrtles whisper to the dead,
There reigns a silence so serene
That spirits haunt this lonely spot
To tell to each what they have seen
In that dire land where love dwells not.
There e'en the breath of summer's day
Pauses to kiss eve's tears away,
There Death itself would fain desire
To chafe its chillness with Love's fire.
Here Love to me its story told.
How old the tale? ah, who can tell?
Albeit it bound me with its spell
As it had done when Adam fell,
Or ere time dreamed of growing old.

BEMBO AND LUCREZIA BORGIA.

AN INTERLUDE.

SCENE—*In the Boudoir of the Duchess of Ferrara. Midnight. Lights burning. The Duchess alone.*

LUCREZIA.

COME batte il mio cuore! e come lento
Passa il tempo che aspetta sull' amore!
Quanto mi duole questa ira!—Esso viene—
O gioja!—Ben venuto Cardinale!

Enter CARDINAL BEMBO.

BEMBO.

I thank Ferrara's Duchess for her wish.
What would your Excellency that I should do,
Now that I've come, fulfilling your commands?

LUCREZIA.

Abide with me, my Bembo, till with love's sweet speech
We have beguiled the lonely hours of night.

BEMBO.

For this intent your Highness did command
I should this night give audience to your will?

LUCREZIA.

For no more dire intent than this, did I
Command thee here; I will not say command—
It is too harsh a word for lovers' tongues.
Say, rather, did beseech thy presence here.
Then shall our words make concord with our hearts,
And the delicious yearnings of my life
Shall know no sweeter joy than that my soul
Shall feast upon thy mellow-measured words.

BEMBO.

What! doth your Highness speak thuswise to prove
If I be traitor to Ferrara's lord and yours:
As if some godless aspiration strove
To make me play the truant to my wits?
Ev'n in my wildest vanity I dare

Not fashion hope to such a treacherous joy
As this wherewith you fain would bait my blood,
Ev'n if I knew your Highness uttered not
These pleasurable words for some conceit.

LUCREZIA.

Bembo, I do but mould the longings of my soul
To words that scarcely shadow forth its will.
Were I to tell thee half my love for thee,
'Twould more than compass thy life's days and mine,
And e'en such time were not enough to speak
Its power, if that the keynote of thy love
Found not in me its passioned harmony.
Why look thus doubtfully? Dost think I sport
With that which well I know must vanquish me?
Dost think I'd drink such deadly poison thus,
And singe my soul with such consuming fires?
Dost think I'd play the fool with such a love—
A love that hungers to devour itself?
I tell thee, Bembo, from the hidden springs
Of all my life I nourish love for thee.

BEMBO.

You'll ever find me faithful to your wish.
In love, or aught your fancy conjures forth

From the dark depths of its most mystic ways,
I am your servant still ; but, should the taint
Of some unseen regret in aftertime
Fall heavily upon your soul, I would
For these your words give you an antidote.
Prince of the Holy Church am I, a priest
To hear confessions, and make light
By absolutions burthens that oppress
The sons and daughters of the Church of Christ.
So if your Highness will, deeming it just,
Confess yourself to me in suchwise as you list.
I'll hearken well, and, as our duty is,
As much as lieth in me tender you
A balm for that which makes your spirit sore.

LUCREZIA.

Then, as a woman who from him she loves,
He loving her, asketh the cherished boon of life,
Grant thou fulfilment to my waning hopes,
And tell me from thy soul thou lovest me.

BEMBO.

Thereby your Highness would the office fill
From which by holy canon you're debarred.

Ev'n if I loved you with such passioned ire
That its tempestuous wrath seethed in my heart,
And life itself were wasting for a kiss,
The which, if I but asked you for, should have,
And thus by hanging on your sigh-steeped lips
I might by tasting their deliciousness
Drink of the draught that slaked my thirsty soul,
I durst not utter it.—For we confess,
As princes of the Holy Church of Christ,
And high in sacred trust, to none but God.

LUCREZIA.

Tell me, my Bembo, that thou lovest me,
'Twill truly be a balm unto my soul;
'Twill ease the loathsome burthen of my fears.
No truer absolution canst thou give
To my infatuated sin, than this—
If sin it be to love thee, since I'm wed
Unto a man rich in conceits of war,
And charged to death with proud alliances,
A man of such chill manners, and of mien
So haughty, but appliant to his will,
That love is still a stranger to his breast,
In whom desire can wake not sympathy.—

Bembo, if sin there be in loving thee,
One for whom nature seemed to fashion me
To be partaker of thy spiritual trust.
I was not formed as meaner women are
To be the puppets of intriguing courts
Who barter for our loves as licenses.
Ah, Bembo, tell me that thou lovest me,
And with a kiss absolve my treasured sin.

BEMBO.

I tell you I confess to none but God.
If you would be absolved for this your love,
Confessing, ope the secrets of your heart
And shew me all the love that's hidden there.
Then shall I search the caverns of my soul
That I may find a balm for your desires,
And make delicious your love-stricken years.

LUCREZIA.

Then hear my soul's confession of its love. [*she kneels.*
But ere I tell how first it grew to be
The mighty thing it is, I will confess
To thee the story of my youth's and matron years.—
Sole daughter of a fierce ambitious priest
My father sought to wed me for his weal,

While yet a child, to one of Spanish race,
But fortune's beacon lighting him to fame,
He wedded me, ere sixteen summers warmed
My blood, to Sforza, Lord of Pesaro.
This youth was one whose heart beloved himself,
Whose little mind was servant to his will,
A vain conceited thing whose constant dreams
Tailored new doublets, and wove silken hose.
Him did I suffer with for full four years,
Oft kissing him the while, but as a child
Caresseth a new toy—because 'tis new.—
But when these years had fled my heart professed
Unto my sire, communion brought not love.
This matched itself unto the Pontiff's mind,
For whom ambition wrought new ways to power.
Thereon he made my old espousals void,—
By virtue of the trust he held from God,
Vicar of Christ, and Pontiff of his Church,—
To mate me with a new and mightier prince,
An offshoot of the house of Aragon.
Hast heard me, father, thus far in my life
Wherein was nurtured my absorbing love?

BEMBO.

As yet no love-tale fell upon mine ears.

But speak, my daughter; if thou ever loved
'Twill doubtless wake my sympathies for thee.
So teach thy tongue to give it utterance,
And tell the sequel to thy wedded life.

LUCREZIA.

Bisceglie's Duke, this time my body's spouse,
Waked nor respect nor love within my breast.
My heart untutored learned the power of hate,
And scourged my thoughts with its demoniac rage.
He was a man whose upright mien bespoke
His mind, whose ambling gait pourtrayed his thoughts;
A man such as a thousand of our maids
Might with duplicity pass lustrums with,
And whom, when dead, might mourn as one beloved,—
A man nor love for self nor friend beguiled,
One for whom life was all involved in feasts,
Amusements, horses, masquerades, and wine;
One dull to all the throbs of sympathy
That leap unbidden in the human breast;
And, though his passion quickened in my womb,
I loathed him who thus meanly measured life,
And whispered one the hate that fettered me,
My brother Cesare, my most true friend.

Anon, at the tenth moon my babe was born—
The kindly providence that made me mother
Soon made an orphan of my new-born babe;
My husband died by the assassin's hand,
Leaving my widowed self a legacy
To him who now is gay Ferrara's Duke.
Hast hearkened, father, to my heart's sad tale?
If pity for me hath a part in thee,
Assure me of it, that my tongue may learn
Words apt in importunity wherewith
To change thy pity into fervorous love.

BEMBO.

If pity can assure thy tongue to speak
More fervidly the yearnings of thy soul,
If pity can thine importunity
Assure with a more certain hope to have
Absolvment clear for thy life's loveless days,
All that is mine I do on thee bestow.
'Tis true that pity often stirs up love,
And that the love thus wakened weds desire
For those whose sorrows find in pity kin.
Thus far thy heart's confessed indifference,
And hate, for which I do conceive thy life

Hath in its fruitlessness atonement made ;
Therefore herein I hold thee as absolved
By God himself, and therein meddle not.
But touching that thy heart would fain confess
I have not heard the lisping of a word,
So pitying pause to hear thee utter it.

LUCREZIA.

Him, for whose name my father bartered me,
I love not ; in the which our hearts are peers,
He lacking love for me : and yet withal
We bear for each a mutual respect,
A debt due all whose lives are brimming full
Of heartfelt deeds and mighty purposes.
Alfonso is a prince whom all his subjects love ;
A man in whose great heart his country's good
Holds sway omnipotent in its estate ;
But in whose breast the fires of love are quenched,
The wells of sympathy long parched by grief
For her whom late he loved, and loving mourns.
Thus by strange ways our diverse feelings verge
To that which hath nor love nor hate—respect—
His later love precluding love for me,
My latest, only love, repelling love for him.

O, Bembo, if thou'dst have confession full,
It is the love I nourish here for thee
Maketh me bear the life-offending ills
Of my lorn spirit's unrequited years.
Now have I told mine inmost thoughts to thee,
And bared my soul's still bleeding wounds in hope
That thy heart's artifice shall be their balm.
Turn thy bright beaming eyes on me, and say
Thou lov'st me; then my gaping wounds are healed,
My weary soul refreshed with joyous hopes
Of days replete with all the ecstasies of love,
When in the sunshine of thy smile I'll bloom
To peace, thereby absolved of all my sin.
Chafe not my fears with doubt; but say thou lov'st
Her, who, in shewing thee her heart, unbound
The sore oppressing chains that womaned her.

BEMBO.

Then be thy soul expurged of all its guilt,
For with thine absolution my heart teems.

LUCREZIA.

O God, thou lov'st me then! or, do I dream?
Come, Bembo, with the melody of speech
Assure me by confessing all thy love.

BEMBO.

Confess—I do confess to none but God.
For wherewithal shalt thou thus be absolved,
Since in confession I surcharge thy soul
With all the guilt of mine. But since thou wilt
Have passioned words with which to charm thine ears,
I'll grant thy very heart's desire, and speak
Thy sin's absolvment from my very soul.

LUCREZIA.

Then let the magic of thy thrilling words
Steep my infatuated fears in bliss.

BEMBO.

Daughter, the agony of thy desires
Hath struck the keynote of my sympathy.
Hear then thine absolution, and consume
Thy fears; as that which makes thy spirit whole
Hath day and night for years consumèd me.
Since first I saw thee as Ferrara's bride,
Decked as a pageant queen beside thy lord,
My fancy traced thy portrait on my heart,
And there 'twill live till death obliter it.
Ev'n though the aspirations of my soul

Scaled to the highest peak of paradise,
I durst not tutor this my cherished hope
To vision thee, Lucrezia, my beloved,
As other than my love's own phantom queen.
But now, since thou hast told me of thy love,
A recompense for all thine ancient woe,
And the waste, barren years of thy young life
Shall in thy absolution compass thee.
Lucrezia, couldst thou fathom my love's depths,
The wildering thought of its profundity
Would swamp to death the shallowness of thine.
Were I to breathe its fierce desires, the fires
That draw from dull cold earth delicious fruits,
Rich in the treasury of beauty's sweets,
Would fail to picture to thy woman-soul
The ravenous flames that lecking fan my love
To surging wrath for thee, mine earthly queen.
Not e'en the plangent wave's convulsive sobs
Fretting their sorrows into myriad tears
Could mirror thee the grievings of my breast
When first I gazed upon thy damask cheek,
Glowing with all the varied hues of youth,
And thought that such a luscious draught as that
Which brimmed upon thy coral lips, would make

Ferrara's son intoxicate that night.
Canst thou divine my love's infinity?
Canst thou not in these burning words inform
Thine amorous soul of the ecstatic love
That panting—panting, ever panting still,
Ravished my life with its unsatiate desire?
O could I speak the mystery of its spell!
Could I but picture thee its might! But, God,
I fail in human speech to fashion forth
The cloven fires that saturate my soul.
Come closer, darling! Hear me, sweet!
Thus—thus do I absolve thy sinning soul [*Kissing her*
By adding to my fires this incensed oil.
Press, press thy burning lips to mine, till full
With my delirious love thy sin's absorpt.

LUCREZIA.

My soul dreamt not of such a soothing balm
As that which thy love-word pours in my heart.
With the delicious joys of our lips' bliss
Let's breathe in each the fire of hidden hopes,
And spoil delusion with a satiate hour.
Pietro, if we lack aught in this our love,.

Let darkness make complete its trancing joy.

[*Blows out the light.*

Now bind me in the rapturous bonds of love,
And with delights love only knoweth of,
Make my infatuated soul thy thrall.
Lay, lay thy head upon my breast, O God!
Now, kiss me, Pietro, kiss me! How he loves!

BEMBO.

'Twere better, sweet, that there should be some light:
'Tis very dark——

LUCREZIA.

Doth darkness hinder love?
The treacherous flames that in our bloods conspire
To vanquish each now hath the hour for spoil.
'Twere better Love should commune in the dark,
That all its latent glories may shine forth
In their impulsive brilliancy to shed
Around our secret ways their lambent light.
Pietro, my love consumes my very soul:
Cast thou on me the waters of thy joy
[illegible]his my ardent blood shall seething waste
[illegible] desires in ecstasy.—A kiss—

Another—O such joy! they ravish me!
Stay! stay! nay, kiss me now, I hunger still;
My very soul is famished for such bliss,—
Now let thy love do with me what it lists.

BEMBO.

Lucrezia, hush! the passion of thy love
Doth as a hurricane o'ercome thy speech.
Abide, and calm thy spirit's storm with this—
[*Kissing her.*
Thus let us pass the midnight hours—abide—abide.

LUCREZIA.

Abide! no—no—subdue my soul with thine!
Pietro, our love shall know no utterance.
O God! O Pietro! give me all thy love!
The darkness covers us—

BEMBO.

Lucrezia, sweet.

LOVE'S AMULET.

Kiss me, my beauty, and tell me
The joy that is sweetest to love ;
Kiss me, and I will caress thee
As 'twere with the wings of a dove.

A dove's love is fierce in its passion,
But a sparrow's is surer and true,
So we'll love as the doves love for fashion,
And strive for the sparrow's love too.

The serpent hath eyes fascinating,
And kisses delicious and keen,
But treachery lives in its favours,
And death in its poisonous spleen.

While its tongue on the lips hangs for pleasure
Giving passionate fire unto faith,
He coileth around you, encircling
Your body with anguish and death.

Kiss me, and tell me the joy, love,
To me that is sweetest an hour:
Kiss me, and tell me in whispers
The force of its fleeting power!

Truth is to love, O the sweetest
Of all the fair joys of the heart:
Then kiss me, and truth, love, shall mingle
Our lives with its joys ere we part.

For sparrow's or dove's love, I tremble
Lest doubt turn to ashes our lust.
So kiss me, my darling, and tell me
If beauty be fleeting like dust.

Yea as dust by a fierce wind is scattered
To parch up the summertide's tears,
So the beauty of woman Time flatters
To temper the wrath of new years.

But truth it endures till the shadow
Of Time's dissolution is nigh,
And its glories make dim the illusion
Of Future's eternity.

Life's love, if that truth should forsake it
And not lend the grace of its bliss,
Must vanish in clouds of old memories
When souls cease to speak in a kiss.

For kisses are sparks from our spirits
Awakened by lips into light,
Whose brilliancies splendours inherit
That dazzle the visions of night.

Then wake on my lips, love, with fervour,
The long-slumbering fires of my soul,
And lighten the dark ways of sorrow
Wherein the fierce waves of doubt roll.

We seek not in Time for the phantom
Of love that is moulded to days;
But we drift towards the death-spoiling beacon
That's wreathed with translucent bays.

Its beauty despoileth the terrors
Of death, and our life's certain doom,
For we hold here the bond of our union
To earth and eternity's gloom.

By that sombre still sea glide the spectres
That fain would us lure with a spell
To the waves that heave high with the sighings
Of sorrows hiccupping from hell.

But life is our season for pastime,
Let us revel and frolic in youth;
Since the suns of old days shine no longer
We'll bask in the starlight of truth.

Then kiss me, my sweet heart, and murmur
What pleasure o'ercometh life's pain,
What rapture despoileth the terror
Of death, our life's sad certain gain?

Sting my lips with those passionate kisses,
Those sparks of our spirits' desires,
And overreach grief with their blisses,
And warm my cold heart with their fires.

Kiss, kiss me, and tell me the feelings
To thee that have mightiest power;
Kiss sweetly, and whisper me softly
The strain of their mystical dower?

The tremulous beauty of passion
Made holy in lifetime and youth,
By the pledges of Love and its saviour,
The angel of lifetime—Love's truth.

JOSEPH AND AMENSIS.

AMENSIS.

My heart is sick for love's enticing ways,
Now that mine eyes have caught the spark that fires
The secret sympathy of amorous souls;
And the foiled sweets my blood hath fed upon
Make my soul furious for a mutual joy
Wherewith to nourish the awakened pangs
That famish and yet feed my hungry breast.
His form is ever mirrored in my dreams,
His shadow haunts me. O! by Egypt's gods,
Entoiled in his embraces amid smiles,
And thrilling kisses, and love's sultry sighs,
My glutton passion shall be satiate;
And the swift current of my secret stream
Shall he, my lovely Hebrew bond-youth, stay

With the first-fruits of his delicious love.
Thou mighty goddess who provoked my birth,
And mated me unto a barren spouse,
Mingle with thy delights my full filled veins,
And with the glowing breathings of thy might
Extol in my completed joy thy power!
O Isis, sovereign goddess of desire,
Wake my expiring faith with trust intense,
And fashion me for pleasure's amorous sweets,
That my enticements may allure this youth,
My Israelitish slave to whom I'm thrall,
To waste with Love's supremest ecstasy
The yearnings of my blood that vanquish me!
Hath Love's infatuation so instilled
My spirit with a serpent-tongued deceit
That I should cheat my lawful lord of joys
That I had vowed were solely his for life,
Or, hath the magic light of this boy's eyes
Bewitched my fancy with those sorceries
That blind life's reason with their mystic ways,
Flooding the barren heart with heavenly light,
Ev'n urging to oblivious shades and death
The blunted passion of life-wedded flesh?
O ye divinities who guard our loves,

Purge my lust-fretted soul of its remorse,
And kindle in love's treasury a flame
Wherewith may be absorbed my blood's desires.

Enter JOSEPH.

JOSEPH.

Potiphar, my master and thy lord, by me
His servant, sendeth greeting unto thee,
The which he would himself have given, but
That Pharaoh by the word of his own mouth
Hath bidden my lord speed with urgent haste
To Memphis, there with him to worship Ptah.
Therefore by me thy lord hath sent his love,
And doth commend you to his gods to heed
In loving wise the duty and the faith
Your mutual loves, for life, require of each.

AMENSIS.

All glory to the gods that taught our Pharaoh's heart
To bid my Lord fulfil his sovereign wish.
And when did Pharaoh and thy master part
To worship Ptah?

JOSEPH.

Ev'n as I entered here
I saw the Pharaoh's chariot pass the gates.

AMENSIS.

Sweet youth, my thanks ; nay, more, my sweeter love,
For this delicious message thou hast taught
Thy Hebrew tongue to bear me from my lord.
Come, sit by me awhile, and tell me, boy,
Of thy captivity, thy home and birth,
Thy father, and thy kin, of her who gave
A gift so goodly to the gods and me ;
For knowest thou that Potiphar bought thee
That thou might'st wait on me as servitor ?

JOSEPH.

Yea, lady, verily I wot my lord
Bought me to serve thee alway in his house,
E'en made me chief thereof for thy sweet sake,
And nought hath holden from me saving thee.
And as thou listest to hear aught of me,
My tongue with joy shall make all known herewith.
Of my captivity, and home, the land
Wherein we dwelt, in Hebron's shady vale,
My father and my kin, of Rachel, she
Who gave me life, shall I now tell to thee.
The wives and handmaids of my father bare
Him twelve male children, and one female child,

Dinah, she whom Shechem, Hamor's son, defiled
Because he loved her, and my sister him.
Then Hamor asked my father, Israel,
If he would give his daughter unto wife,
Seeing that Shechem was beloved by her.
And when he communed with his sons, they spake
To Hamor, saying: 'Let your sons and all
Your males be circumcised, then we will wed
Our sister to your son, and, furthermore,
Our daughters will we wed unto your sons;
And if you will, your daughters shall we wed,
And we shall be one people serving God.'
And all the Shechemites were circumcised:
Whereon in treachery my brethren, twain,
Simeon and Levi, smote them with the sword
So that they died: then spoiled them of their goods:
For in that Shechem with our sister lay,
Great folly had been wrought in Israel.
My mother, Rachel, to my father bare
Two sons, my brother Benoni and me.
For her our father, Israel, twice seven years
Laban, his uncle and her father, served
In Padan-aram, whither he had fled
Before his brother Esau's face; for he,

In that his mother did abet him to't,
Purloined deceitfully the blessing which
Isaac, their sire, would fain have given him.
Therefore he sware him by a mighty oath
To compass Jacob's death whene'er the days
Of mourning for their father passed; for our
Grandfather Isaac was on point of death
When Jacob stole our uncle Esau's right.
But El-Elhohe-Israel him saved;
For it was told him of his brother's oath:
Therefore to Padan gat he secretly,
And there our mother, Rachel, did he woo;
For, verily, he loved her with great love,
And asked her sire to give her unto wife;
And Laban said, 'Serve thou for full seven years,
Then shall I give thee Rachel for thy wife.'
And Israel said to Laban, 'Be it so.'
And Israel served for her seven weary years,
Which, when fulfilled, a marriage feast was made,
And Laban gave him Leah unto wife;
But her my father, Jacob, never loved,
For she was tender-eyed, and elder-born.
And Jacob said, 'Why hast thou served me thus?
My wage was Rachel, prithee give me her.'

And Laban said, 'We have a custom here
That she who is the younger may not wed
Before her sister that is elder-born;
So serve thou seven more years, and I
Will surely give thee Rachel for thy wife.'
And Israel served for her: for with a love
Supreme he loved her; and they twain were wed,
And Rachel to my father bare me first,
And in her death my brother Benoni.

AMENSIS.

O cruel, cruel, and unkindly death
To smite the tree that bore such goodly fruit!
In sooth did Israel, thy father, love
Thy mother: but how came it thou wast sold
To be a bondsman to the Midianites?
For those who sold thee to my lord thus spake
Concerning thee, 'From merchants, whom their speech
Bewrayed as Midianites, we purchased him.'
Now tell me wherefore thou didst leave the vale
Of Hebron, wherein thou wast born, and where
Thy brethren and thy kindred dwell, and where
Thou say'st thy father lives, and hath his home;
For, verily, thy God dealt sore with thee,
Seeing thou'rt highly favoured, and still young.

JOSEPH.

Thus was it, lady; ever since my birth
My father loved me with exceeding love,
Seeing I was his Rachel's eldest-born,
And the first pledge of their united loves,
The which with jealous eyes my brothers saw;
Therefore with hatred keen they hated me.
In time, behold, I dreamed a dream, in which
Meseemed my brethren and myself did glean
After the reapers in my father's fields,
And that my sheaf of its own will arose
Upright, and stood, while all my brothers' sheaves
Did likewise, but obeisance made to mine.
Wherefore my brethren hated me the more,
And baited me with bitter words, therefore
I sorrowed in my heart and held my peace.
Anon, it came to pass I dreamed another dream:
Meseemed that in the highest heavens I saw
The sun, moon, and eleven stars, to me
Bow lowly down, which thing I told my sire;
For which he did rebuke me sorely, saying,
'Shall I, thy mother, and thy brethren bow
Ourselves before thee to the earth?' and laughed,
But not in mockery; and my brothers spake
No word, but all while hated me the more.

AMENSIS.

By Ra, in strange-wise did thy troubles come.
And did thy God who shewed thee all these dreams
Deliver thee into thy brothers' hands?
Say on, say on, how came it thou wast sold
To strangers, seeing the Apuriu are free?

JOSEPH.

It came to pass at Shechem were our flocks,
The which my brethren tended for our sire.
Thither my father sent me, for he said,
'I fain would learn if all be well with them,
And with the flocks:' so thitherward I went.
Lo, when I came unto the field where erst
They shepherded the flocks, they were not there;
And as I sought them, one came by and said,
'What seekest thou?' and then I answered him:
'I seek my brethren and their flocks; I pray
Thee where be they?' and lo, he said, 'I heard
Them say, "To Dothan let us go."' Then I
To Dothan straightway went, and found them there.
And when I told them all my father's wish,
How that he yearned to know if they were well,
And if the flocks were well; they answered nought,

But communed with themselves to take my life.
Whereon my brother Reuben said, 'We will
Not slay the lad, but cast him in this pit.'
For, peradventure thought he, I will save
The lad. Then did they cast me in the pit;
And then my brother Reuben went away.
Then did the others, lifting up their eyes,
Behold a company of Ishmaelites,
The offspring of our great-grandfather's son
By Hagar, Ishmael, who with their mules
And camels came from Gilead, and brought
With them its zori, spiceries, and myrrh,
Which they to Egypt, here, for hither they
Were bound, did bring for merchandize. To these
My kindred sold me, and they unto thee.
Thus did it come to pass God brought me here
To find sweet bondage, lady, in thy house,
All glory to Jehovah, Israel's God,
For truly he hath made my sorrow light.

AMENSIS.

O kindly God that brought thee here for me;
And but for these thy dreams thou had'st ne'er seen
My face, nor these mine eyes have mirrored thine.

Come bide by me all day, and we will talk
Of Hebron's valley, and its silvery streams,
Of Shechem, Dothan, and of Gilead
Whence come the balm and myrrh which lend
Voluptuous graces to Egyptian maids.
Then thou shalt strive and teach me thy sweet speech,
The tongue in which thou say'st Jehovah speaks,
And thus, the while my lord's away, we'll make
Delicious pastime, and our lives shall be a joy;
For fain would I beguile the tortoise-hours
Of this my youth by learning some sweet words
In thy soft Hebrew speech. Now tell me, boy,
How callest thou this earth in thine own tongue,
That I with my Egyptian voice may strive
To utter it with all the flow of thine.

JOSEPH.

Haärets: thus do we entitle it.

AMENSIS.

O apt, apt speech that thus in harsh notes calls
The kindless earth, Haärets, ev'n my tongue
Doth catch its bitterness; and yet meseems
Ev'n in its bitterness there's much that's sweet.

Haärets ! how I love thee, for thou art
A holy surety, and a happy joy,
And in thy sorrow there is much of bliss
That death in all its glory rivals not.
Pray look on this : knowest thou what sign it is ?
What import the design, and how divine ?

JOSEPH.

It is an emerald as a beetle graven,
But what its import is I cannot say.

AMENSIS.

It is a scarabeus : worn by all our dames
To ever emblem to their minds that after death
We have another life, and that the next
Surpasses in its joy the majesty of this.
The whither we obtain this life is heaven.
Hast thou in native speech so sweet a word ?

JOSEPH.

Nay, lady ; such a place we wot not of.
But where our God, Jehovah, dwells we call
By *Hashamayim ;* but its palaces
Doth no man fashion as his dwelling-place

When we to God yield up our body's ghost.
For we do hold, at least our fathers held,
That in our death we barter all that's life's,
And pass into that land from whence we came
In labouring sorrow; but what whither 'tis,
Alas, our blinded reason cannot dream.

AMENSIS.

And do thy father and thy brethren think
Men hath no dwelling in this realm of God?
Nay, surely, each must have an after hope;
For life is but a wearisome decree,
A vague and unsubstantial thing, that wastes
Ere it is e'en complete. Hast thou no hope?

JOSEPH.

Yea, lady, much: not for myself, alas;
For our Jehovah ne'er hath promised bliss
Of an eternal pastime after death
To any son of Abraham; but for
The offspring of our loins hath he reservèd much.
For, verily, on earth we shall be great.

AMENSIS.

Hath the Apuriu no noble name
Whereby to call their mighty God's abode?

JOSEPH.

We have; but our Jehovah's dwelling-place
Cannot contain his majesty: the heavens,
The seas, and all dark places that the ken
Of man can ne'er attain to, all's too small
To hold the awful mightiness of Him
Who is Elohim, Adonaï, God.
The name by which we call his dwelling-place
Is *Hashąmayim;* for the lofty skies,
Alone, maintain the holiness of him
Who is our El-Elohe-Israel.

AMENSIS.

O sweet, sweet name! let me but whisper it!
Is't *Hashamayim*—heavens?—delicious sound!
Could I but give thee, word, thy latent power,
My tongue should echo through the world
The mellow voicèd pleasures of thy joy.
What! Hashamayim! O thou thrilling word,
My voice doth quiver lending it to speech!
For in thy harmonies I hear the whispering voice
Of Him who is our God, and mighty Isis' spouse.
O fruitful, generous Isis, teach me love!
Doth thy God know the influence of love?

Or is He in His ways an all-absorbing power,
Self-generative, self-conceiving, one
In whom his own desire fulfils itself?
Or, hath he in himself that which distils
The secret richness of earth's thrilling love?
Or, hath he one who queens his every will,
Fulfils his passion, and consumes his love
With sweet inducements as our Isis doth
Osiris, who is Egypt's chiefest god?
If that thy God be sovereign of such bliss,
The passioned ecstasy of earthly love,
Then tell me of it, that my soul may woo
So fair a deity as is thy God.
For I do pant to whet my youthful blood
With the rapt pleasures of an amorous god,
Since we in Egypt lack our heart's desire
In that we serve a god whose loves are wan,
Whose mystic rites awaken in our breasts
The magical delights of jocund youth
To lay them waste with unsufficing ire.
Such be our gods: with all the artifice
Their priests can conjure to instil our minds
With their empyreal grace, our spirits mock,
And find in all their ways the boast of power,—

An inane, false, deceptive might, that all
In seeming hold as creed, while in their hearts
They yearn to serve some love-inspiring god.
O I would worship such a God as thine
If I but knew that in his Godhead dwelt
Man's boon of life, the complement of love.
Tell me, O tell me if thy God be love.

JOSEPH.

I wot not, truly, if our God be love;
For by such name great Abram knew Him not.
Albeit He dowers the earth with love and life,
The which delighteth man till death's dire day.
And I have heard our father Israel say,
'Serve ye Jehovah; then your days shall wax
In peace and plenteousness, and in the night
Shall trancing love be pillowed on your breasts.'

AMENSIS.

O promise fair! then let love pillow here,
And in my every thought I'll worship Him
Who is thy God. Come hither, boy! my soul
Is faint to learn from thine own lips the love
Which in the night-time pillows on our breasts

If we do serve Elohe-Israel.
Pray teach me how to worship, then my soul
Will satisfy itself with all its ire,
And the dull fires that smoulder in my breast
Shall burst to splendour for love's sacrifice.
Know, Hebrew, I do rage to feast upon
The sweets of such a strange-like cult; for long
My blood hath hungered for such joy, e'en till
The vesicles of my lorn heart have drunk
Libations of false hope to famishment. O God!
How I do pine for such a love as this,
With which thou say'st thy God is full
As Nilus, when with Ethiopia's snows,
Molten by An, she overflows to floods,
Through Egypt spreading rich fertility.
Let me but bask a spell beneath its rays,
Then shall my spirit, flushed with all its sweets,
Intoxicate my life with its deliciousness,
And my weird fancies shall assume the robes
In which Love clothes itself the while it feasts.
Yea, more, I'll waken all the majesty
Of its sublime divinity, and thus
Foil, frustrate, and dispel the passion which
In secret doth consume my unjoyed life—

For life hath many complements of joy
We never exercise to yield us bliss.
By Isis, I beseech thee with thy lips
To teach my yearning soul the trancing power
Of this all-luminous and magic love.
This do, and this thy recompense shall be :—
I'll worship none but Him who is thy God,
And pay my vows to none save Him who thralls
For such delicious servitude thy kin.
Haste, haste and teach it me ; then shall my tongue
Lisp forth my vows in praise, and I will cry,
Surely, Jehovah only is a God.

JOSEPH.

O lady, would my tongue could speak His love,
Then should I tell it thee with all my heart.
But I, who am a servant of our God, wot not
Its mighty mystery ; but this I know
That those who taste its bliss find heaven therewith,
And nought remains to chafe man's burning soul
With keen desire for unaccomplished peace ;
For all the heart's desires are made thereby complete.
Would I could be herein thy monitor,
Then this my tongue would loose itself with joy
To tell in liquid strains the hallowed love of El ;

And we should bask beneath the mystic flames
That flash like shivered lightning from its glow,
Till by the haven of our lives, by death—
Our souls should wing the whither whence they came.

AMENSIS.

Meseems this love thou speakest of is sanctified
By earthly sweets, else would its bliss be lack
Of those ethereal dreams that gild our lives,
Since thy God gives thee not a future land
Upon the hope of which to hazard bliss
Formed of the cunning ecstasies of time,
No after-life to balm thy soul for death.
Then, surely, this empyreal love thy God
Possesseth must be tutored to an earthly joy;
And if herewith He halloweth your days,
Then must your souls' acquittal be made full
In love's distilled desires that all your lives
Taste its enticements upon earth ere death,
Smiting with poisonous shaft, doth vanquish all.
Tell me, fair youth, if in thy life thy lips
Have ever hung on woman's for a spell
Of rapturous moments, till thy blood caught fire.
Nay, blush not, tell it me, for mine own lips

Are parching to be pressed to thine—there, there,
I have confessed my wish; and by my very soul
I yearn to taste the flavour of thy lips,
For I have heard a priest of Isis say,
The tingle of strange flesh when kissed is sweet;
So I would fain now search the truth thereof,
And thus anoint my soul, a novice made
For love's captivity, with its strange balm.
Ev'n such an one as thou art have I dreamt
Should chasten my long famished hopes with love.
Come, yield thee to my joy, and we shall chase
The disappointing fears that gather round
Our hearts like shadows gloomed by woe. Come, come,
Make satisfied my hest, and we shall be
Full of the maddening bliss that is of earth.

JOSEPH.

O wherefore speak'st thou thus? for love, I've heard
My father oft-times say, is not of earth, but heaven.
For 'twas with such a love he served for her
Who was his best-belovèd wife. And, too,
I've heard that such a love may be 'mongst men,
And full as hallowed and as ripe with bliss.
But such love hath not part in me, for I

Have never loved, nor wooed such love as thou
Would'st have me wed wherewith to encounter thine.
Yea, I would feast on such a mellow fruit
If I might know where I may garner it.

AMENSIS.

Then let thy soul make banquet with my love,
And satiate thy longings with its fruits!
Now hold thy peace, and I will tutor thee.
Give me thy lips to kiss, and I will chafe
Thy rigid blood until it burn and burn
With such consuming heat that thou shalt call
Upon thy God to yield thee unto love.
For, by my faith, in Egypt well we wot to love,
And have in us the power to charge the blood,
And every pleasing sense inoculate,
With such empyreal joy, that when thou hang'st
Upon my lips the twinkling of a star
Thy soul shall gasp for its delight, and then
In searching out the fountains of my love
Thou'lt find accomplishment to thy desires.
Nay, blush not, for in woman dwells man's bliss,
And in her body is fulfilment to his will.
She ever hath with her the boon of joy

Wherewith to satisfy his amorous hest;
But that which woman doth desire of man
Is but the passing tribute of his blood,
From whence springs ecstasy, and sweetest love,
And all intense delights that hallow life;
For in the yearnings of his blood she finds
Completion to desire, not in himself,
The which when lacking love's fierce wrath is but
The guardian of love's most mysterious spell.
Come, sit by me, and we will tune our hearts
To strains of some new-fashioned harmony
Waked in strange-wise with sighs, and wanton hopes,
And all the thrilling favours that break forth
In chantings mystical from kindred souls.
Yea, we will blend our spirits with thy God's,
For in that He is Love we shall be His;
For I am overwhelmed with Love's behests.
Hearken the while I shew thee all my soul,
And whisper whence is this sweet will that chafes
My blood, my lips, and all my thoughts with flame,
Whose cunning ardour whets to madding rage,
And wakes my hunger for the feasts of love!
Hear how I would make waste its ravenous fires!—
By hanging on thy lips a love-pledged hour.

JOSEPH.

I would that I could all thy wants fulfil.
Then should I make complete thy love-desires
Ev'n to the acme of their wildest dreams.
But, verily, I wot not ought of such a love
As this, the which thou speakest of, else with my soul
I'd yield thee all the bliss thy heart doth seek.
Jehovah, He who is my father's God,
Hath never shewed me aught of this His love
Which thou would'st fain encompass for thy joy,
Else I would make its raptures one with thee.

AMENSIS.

Sit by me here, and I will tell thee all
The powers that hallow this divine-like gift.
But ere I would depict its magic arts,
Tell me if in that charmèd speech in which
Jehovah communes with thy kin, there is
A word that hath the melody and grace,
And fiery force of that which we call—Love?

JOSEPH.

I wot of no diviner art than that
Which did my father and my mother make

As one, of no sublimer power than that
Which throbs in human breasts, and wakes anon
The heart to seek its mate for earthly bliss.
This we call Love; but if it hath in it
The fiery force of that which is thy love,
I know it not, ne'er having tasted it.
But, truly, for its sweets my spirit yearns.

AMENSIS.

If thou wilt list to me, thy virgin soul
Shall learn this art: then shall thy days be full
Of pleasure, and the summer of thy life
Be golden with the ripe fruits of its joys.

JOSEPH.

O lady, teach it me; for even now
My spirit thirsts to know the power which made
My father for my mother, Rachel, serve
In Padan-aran fourteen weary years.
O tell it me, that I may feast my heart therewith.

AMENSIS.

In sooth, anon I'll tell it thee: but hast
Thou not amongst thy deities one who

Doth make thy youths and maids as fruitful vines,
One who doth teach their lips in glowing words
To woo delicious bliss, and plight themselves
To each for life and hidden after-time?

JOSEPH.

We have no God but one, Jehovah, He
Is Israel's God, and Him alone we serve,
And He is terrible in war and hate,
And visits with His wrath His enemies,
And overthroweth those who rise to smite
Against His majesty with alien will.
If that He have this attribute of love
I wot not! haply it may be; but I
Have never caught the sweet sounds of its theme.

AMENSIS.

O strange, strange people with a strange-like God!
Possessing one who lacks the balm of life.
Strange people! Yea, meseems if for a God
I had but one, I'd choose him who is Love.
Not love whose elements are water-like,
But whose full complements are fire.
Now, hearken, while I tell thee of our god,

The essence of whose subtle being is love.
This power our priests pourtray in woman's form.
How beautiful and generous are her gifts!
Her name is Hathor when the love she pours
In human breasts makes friendships spring;
But Isis, when with her tremendous ire
She swamps our veins with all the ecstasies
That flash and foam from passioned bliss.
She is our life—Her chiefest sanctuary
Is Busiris; there in her leafy grove
Nilus in silence blends his joys with hers.
If thou wouldst see Egyptia's Queen of Queens
In all her glory worshippèd—'tis there,
There eyes and soul would feast themselves until
Thy brain with all the amorous sights thou'dst see
Should reel as if o'ercome by Kakem wine.
O Isis! how I pant to serve thee now!
O Hebrew, by my soul if once her joys
Be blent in thine, I wage this God of thine
Shall ask from thee thy vows in vain. Come, come
And let us twain this day serve Isis, she
Who with her myriad pleasances and wiles
Chafes the unbloomed desire of Egypt's maids.
But, by my troth, me kindlessly she mocked

By wedding me unto a barren man
Who taunts my fancy with a thousand dreams
Of joy acquired, still lacking all the joy,
Of bliss complete, still wanting all the bliss
Of those full throbbing sweets that savour life
And make delicious pastime of our youth.
But yet, withal, I'll serve her if she will.
And if thou wilt be antient to my vows,
Then shall my heart be satisfied, and all
The dreamy influence of love
That gathers joyously about my paths
Shall make the secret springs of life flow o'er
With teeming flood; and heaven's lucent light
Shall with its magic woo my new-found love,
Whose hallowed pleasures shall bewitch my blood.
Arise, my Hebrew, let us worship her;
For Isis queens the phalanx of the gods.

JOSEPH.

This goddess, Isis, she of whom you speak,
Full often have I heard of, and her power,
And fain would I be antient to thy pledge;
But, she being stranger to my God, I may
Not worship her lest Elohim despoil

My life for paying at her altars vows
Which He doth deem His recompense for breath,—
For thus would shame be wrought in Israel.
Nay, lady, nay; I durst not thus offend.

AMENSIS.

What! doth thy God forbid thee e'en to love?

JOSEPH.

I know not; but if shame thereby be wrought,
Shame that doth gloom the countenance of man,
And dim the glory of my people's God,
Then, verily, I may not harbour love
Lest God should smite me in his vengeful ire
And cast me forth from Israel's heritage.

AMENSIS.

O cruel, and unkindly God! But thinkest thou
That Isis could o'ercome thy God by love?

JOSEPH.

In sooth she might, if that her power be great
Enough to match itself 'gainst Elohim's,
Whose mightiness outreaches human ken,
Who holds close-bound within His lightest thought

The storms contending in infinite space,
Whose very wrath when kindled rives the heavens
That would contain His dire impulsive rage.
If she have power to combat with such might,
If Love can overwhelm Elohim's strength,
Then, surely, shall our God be overcome.

AMENSIS.

Ah, youth, this love which Isis hath, hath power
To crumble in a breath yon mighty sphinx,
E'en tame the fiercest lion of the grove,
Stay battles, and appease the hate of kings,
Subdue dissension, and compel to tears
The eyes that flashed destruction on a foe.
This love of which we speak, fermenting prayer,
Doth so intoxicate the very Gods
With such intense delight that they comply
To the unuttered longings of the soul.
Endowed with this seductive element,
Think'st thou that Isis would o'ercome thy God?
Yea; and of this great power she hath enow
To whelm the mystic heavens, the seas, the world
With all the fruitful treasures of her joys,
Enow to make inebriate with bliss

This cold, insensible, decaying clay
That is ennobled with the soul of love
By the supreme decree of her high will.
'Tis she who clothes our spirit with that hope
That cowers before the tomb, the magic hope
Of immortality, with which we chafe
Our most inconstant selves until we faint,
And make this spectre-wish a bitter-sweet,
The which we neither compass nor destroy,
Seeing in its uncertainty there's joy
That magnifies itself with majesty
As unsubstantial as a phantom-bark
That waxes with illusion till in clouds
Of night it fades to very nothingness.
This Isis breathes that keen delicious dew
That nourishes in youth the buds of love,
Love whose beguiling sweet thou soon must taste,
Else is thy life an unesteemèd gift
Which thou wilt give again unto thy God
Charged with the fetid airs and chymic fumes
Of time-developed sin, which gift He dowered
Thee with in unmatured divinity,
Wherein the seeds of purity lay hid
Till they should in the sunshine of love's years
Ripen for heaven and immortality.

JOSEPH.

Lady, I fain would taste of this sweet bliss,
Fain hear of Isis and her attributes,—
Those sacred influences that make life
An amulet unto the soul for peace.
Tell, tell me all her charmèd ways and wiles
That I may banquet Thought the while you speak.

AMENSIS.

'Tis she who swells the waters of the Nile—
He is her love—for her his veins are full
With life-producing power, the which he yields
To her desire till barren fields made ripe
With all the golden treasures of the year
Fill full the threshing-floors of this my land,
Egypt the amber-sandalled and the starry crowned,
The mother of astrologers and arts,
Twin-born with Time, and best beloved of God.
O how I love thee, cradle of the earth!
But Isis—Isis Egypt's goddess-queen—
'Tis she who in her plenitude of love
Giveth us pastime and delight in man,
Trains the ingenuous heart to kindly ways,
Makes earth the treasure-house of bliss for time,

Fashions the hopes that they may twine around
Uncertain years and bind our souls thereto.
'Tis she who in the raptures of her love
Breathes in the soul strange ecstacies until
They swell within the heart to wake desire.
Such is the God thy soul should serve, 'tis one
Whose myriad attributes surcharge the brain,
For all its varied powers converge with such
Divine-like dreams to love, that life's a heaven.
Come, let us twain now yield ourselves to love.

JOSEPH.

I durst not; lest I thus offend my God.
For peradventure this strange love
Of which you speak is alien to His will.

AMENSIS.

Love alien to Jehovah's will! In truth
This God of thine must be at enmity
With that which is His better self if He
Offence can find in aught that is of love.
Then, wherefore, as thou say'st, did He create
The heavens, the earth, the seas, and all that lives,
If love were not the architect thereof?
Wherefore did He choose you, Apuriu,

From out the peoples of the earth to be
Select unto Himself if He lack love?
Why, in the choice love was made manifest;
For loving you He chose you to Himself
To be beloved. Come, yield with me to love.
If thou wilt hearken to my wish, love's joys
Will recompense thee for thy fears. Wilt hear!
By all my soul doth own I love thee, boy,
Yea, love thee in suchwise as Isis loves,
Or teaches us to love. Hear, hear awhile!
For thee my passion's full, and would complete
The raptures of its latest trance with thee.
Come, come, with kisses and caresses sweet,
We'll press out time between our lips and give
Our souls the food they each now hunger for.
If thine doth hunger not, know, mine is faint
With wasting famishment. Come, sweet,
Now yield thee to my hest, and press my lips
With thine, and thus we'll leaven Isis' joy.
Now give and take this pledge of love. O God!

[*They kiss.*

JOSEPH

O sweet! Stay! precious joy! There, there, enough.

AMENSIS.

Nay, press until our lips have caught the fire
That smoulders fiercely in our hidden souls.

JOSEPH.

Withhold! withhold! thy lips are like to fire.

AMENSIS.

With such a fire doth Isis kindle love.

JOSEPH.

This love with which thy goddess fills the blood
Courses like molten flames e'en to the heart.

AMENSIS.

Thereby she teaches man her magic bliss.
Thuswise she makes her choicest favours full.

[*Kisses him.*

JOSEPH.

We will forego this joy; I fear this love,
Lest it may sacrifice my God in me.

AMENSIS.

If it hath power, then yield thee to its will.

JOSEPH.

I dare not, knowing not the will thereof.

AMENSIS.

To immolate itself with its own fires.

JOSEPH.

Consuming him who makes the sacrifice.

AMENSIS.

Nay, her for whom the sacrifice is made.

JOSEPH.

Not yielding aught in recompense thereof.

AMENSIS.

Yea, leaving much wherewith to feast again.

JOSEPH.

Doth Love survive its own self-sacrifice?

AMENSIS.

From its own ashes doth it rise again.

JOSEPH.

Then we will make an offering of our gifts
Before we make complete the sacrifice.

AMENSIS.

Seeing that the gifts be made acceptable.

JOSEPH.

Say what oblations most appease the God.

AMENSIS.

A sacrifice made full with love complete.

JOSEPH.

If that the love be sacrificed when full,
Doth such oblation then appease the God?

AMENSIS.

Until she long for new-made sacrifice.

JOSEPH.

But there be gifts all-pleasing unto love,
And offerings made ere sacrifice?

AMENSIS.

Truly; but these be such as waken her to ire,
Else, lacking which, the sacrifice is vain.

JOSEPH.

These gifts then be oblations made by faith.

AMENSIS.

Without which Isis mocks such sacrifice.

JOSEPH.

What be the gifts to her acceptable?

AMENSIS.

These be the gifts delicious unto her. [*Kisses him.*

JOSEPH.

Delicious are these gifts to those who give.

AMENSIS.

And goodly are the lips that hallow them.

JOSEPH.

O would our God, Jehovah, taught such love,
And favoured such sweet, bloodless sacrifice!
For such soul-thrilling bliss as this ne'er taught
My Hebrew lips the theme of very joy.
Yea, I will taste its madding ecstasy
Until my soul hath learned its artifice.
Here, here, from thy delicious lips I take
Their sweetest gifts to offer them to love.
[*Kisses her.*
Thy service, Isis, is a trancing joy.

AMENSIS.

Press close until thy lips are satiate!

O sweeter, far, than choice Anthylla wine
Whose draughts distil such passion from the blood.
Of more intoxicating power, are these
Thy lips whereon I banquet now my soul,
And quaff in copious draughts the bowl of joy
Whose taste doth whet the bloodless sacrifice
We make anon to Isis in our love.
Here could I bide, and chafe desire, until
My boiling blood throbbed loudly in my veins,
And the sublimer essence of my life
Sought its distilment in accomplished bliss.
Soul lend thyself to love's abandonment!
And you ye lips drink the ambrosial draught
Ere the full-brimming cup o'erflow itself!

JOSEPH.

O would to God my blood could make full feast,
And satiated taste the ecstasy of love.

AMENSIS.

E'en so then let it be; for all my love
Is thine, and to thy wish my body's slave.
Delay not in fulfilling thy blood's hest,
That in its rapt fulfilment I may give
Accomplishment intense to my desire.

JOSEPH.

I wot not what is that thou yearnest for.

AMENSIS.

My soul's desire abides on thy love's will
Whereon to feast with glutton appetite.

JOSEPH.

What! doth the worshippers of Isis feast
Upon the remnants of the sacrifice?

AMENSIS.

Nay; but upon the sacrifice itself.

JOSEPH.

And doth the goddess taste no part thereof?

AMENSIS.

Truly, the essence, only, she partakes.

JOSEPH.

If we consume the offerings, what remains
Whereby the goddess may be satisfied?

AMENSIS.

The ecstasy of all her votaries;

For it's the essence of the sacrifice
Which finds its distillation in our veins.

JOSEPH.

In thuswise then the goddess feasts herself:
She banquets on the pleasures of her love.

AMENSIS.

Seeing that her worshippers are satiate.

JOSEPH.

Else the oblation's not acceptable?

AMENSIS.

If sacrifice succeed not to the gifts.

JOSEPH.

Then I would fain propitiate this love
Which Isis prompts our spirits to. There, there.
[*Kisses her.*

AMENSIS.

Another, yet another—thus we whet
Great Isis' appetite by chafing love.

JOSEPH.

O what delirious joys these sweet gifts wake.

AMENSIS.

A madding joy that must exhaust itself.
My spirit grows intoxicate therewith.
O Isis, goddess of my life, make full my hope!
Are they not sweet, delicious, keen? O Love!
[*Kisses him.*
Now let's together quaff Love's nuptial draught.

JOSEPH.

Abide! Withhold! this thing I durst not do
For all this love belongeth to thy lord.

AMENSIS.

Nay, jest not, Hebrew, yield thee to my hest,
No soul shall learn aught of our sacrifice.

JOSEPH.

I dare not thus great Potiphar requite,
Seeing that he trusteth me, withholding nought
From me save thee, his wife. O how I yearn
To taste the raptures of thy fervent blood
And make with thee this pleasing sacrifice.
But no—I durst not worship thus strange gods,
Or make them sacrifice in anywise
Lest El-Elohe-Israel should send

Upon this mystic worship untoward woe.
I'll hence—temptations ofttimes vanquish us.

AMENSIS.

Ah stay! repent not thus thy latest wish
But yielding to thy will bestow on me
The plenteous harvest of thy first-reaped love.

JOSEPH.

Jehovah! God of Israel! Give ear,
Lend speedy succour to my wavering soul.
Forego thy pleadings, love, I'll hence—Farewell.
[*Attempts to run off, but she holds him.*

AMENSIS.

Nay, stay; my very life I'd sacrifice
To be partaker of thy love. Fulfil
Thy wish and mingle thy desires with mine.

JOSEPH.

What, if thereby I give my God offence.

AMENSIS.

In nowise can offence thereby be given.

JOSEPH.

My conscience bids me shun this mystic rite.

AMENSIS.

Thereby may not thy conscience barter that
Which may be pleasing to thyself and God?

JOSEPH.

Yea, but the spirit ever prompts to good.

AMENSIS.

If that the flesh desire some evil thing.
Seeing that love is hallowed by the gods
No godless thing can ever spring therefrom.

JOSEPH.

Of this would I take counsel of my God.

AMENSIS.

But will Jehovah hearken to thy prayer
Lacking therewith a bloody sacrifice?

JOSEPH.

Surely, if so be I do counsel ask
Desiring fully to acquaint my soul
If such love be acceptable to Him.

AMENSIS.

Then press my burning lips another while

That I may feast my eager hopes once more
Upon the kiss that ravishes my flesh.

JOSEPH.

Why court contagion thus from lips
That echo but the murmurings of the blood?
Why thus consume thy very soul? There,—there.
[*Kisses her.*

AMENSIS.

Now bind me with thine arms in circlet-wise!
Another while, ah yet another while,
Perchance our alien spirits shall accord.

JOSEPH.

Nay, nay, forgo! I cannot longer stay
To trifle with temptation so. Farewell;
Lady, God give thy spirit peace, farewell. [*Runs off.*

AMENSIS.

Gone, gone, and still my love unsatisfied.
O Isis, why thus chafe me with false hopes?
Why waken in my soul these strange desires?
Why mock me with such sweets to ruin me?
For lo this Hebrew youth hath every element
That makes conspirator of Love against

The sacred majesty of virtuous will,
And is endowed with that keen sympathy
That wakes the latent fires of love to flames.
O, goddess, make my yearning, famished flesh
Full satisfied with thy delights! Inspire
This lovely youth with passion's rapturous wish,
And teach his virgin love the secret spell
That influences joy, that he may seek
And find accomplishment thereof in me.
My lord to whom I'm wed endows not love
With its inheritance; therefore my blood
Flows through my youthful veins with barren flood
To fret my life with unfulfilling wants.
Perchance, if patiently I tutor him,
The acme of my hopes may be attained,
And that which is my heart's most cherished wish,
Shall search the caverns of his virgin love
And find the spell that needs must vanquish him.
Surely, in time accomplishment must come
If only opportunity be apt;
For I have heard the priests of Isis say,
That she by her obdurate will o'ercomes
The Goddess Pasht, so that she yields to love
The favours virtue consecrates to her.

Him would I compass thus, subduing him.
Yea, by the gods I'll die or hold him thrall;
For all my blood is flames, and parches me.
O, Isis, succour me in this my need!
Then shall thy servant, grateful, worshipping
Before thine altars, lay the first fair fruits
Of that which thou shalt give as pledge of love.
Deep in my thoughts this burning wish shall lie
Until I find the well-spring of his sympathy.
For, truly, man's desire is woman's love,
And woman's love-wish is for man's desire.
O for this keen desire! I'd barter half
My mated years to call its pleasures mine.
Help me, O Isis, then my prayers shall know
No God or Goddess, saving only thee.
Again he comes! O, how my fluttering soul
Beateth against the barriers of my breast.
Haply he comes obedient to my will.

Enter JOSEPH.

Say, say, what tidings dost thou bear me now?

JOSEPH.

E'en while I speak, my master and thy lord
Awaits thy coming in the outer hall.

AMENSIS.

What, hath my lord already hither come?
The Pharaoh worshipped Ptah short while to-day,
Else had they not returned ere evensong.

JOSEPH.

Why, lady, 'tis past sundown full an hour.

AMENSIS.

Indeed! how swiftly wing the hours we lend
To love! Meseems the heart forgets its toil
When the infatuating spell of hope
Blindfolds the longing eyes that watch on time.
Ah me!—what would thy master have with me?

JOSEPH.

Touching the cat-faced goddess' festival
At Bubastis, the whither Pharaoh goes
To-night accompanied by all his court,
Hither must Potiphar betake himself;
So he would have thee bear him company.

AMENSIS.

Go, say to Potiphar I hither come
With an obedient wife's becoming haste.

[*Exit* JOSEPH.

How coldly looked he on me while I spake !
'Tis strange I cannot teach him the sweet song
That finds rapt harmony in human breasts.
Perchance the god he serves forbids this love—
It cannot be : I'll strive again and conquer him,
Subdue his yet unvanquished soul with mine.
By supplications meek and opportune
Will I beguile his guileless heart to love,
And tutor him in all its mysteries.
What wakened first this sympathy in me,
The languid beauty of his sable eyes,
The liquid flowing of his people's speech,
Whose words like honey trickle from the tongue,
Or the ingenuous utterings of his soul
Which panther-like made of my heart its prey ?
Conscience—thou querist of our secret ways !
I cannot answer thee this hidden thing.
It was not Set's device this sympathy ?
No, no ; it is not sin to sanctify
The life with holy love, since I am wived
To one whose lips are alien to my blood,
Whose barren kisses make my spirit pant
For the delirious joys of womanhood.
O cruel, cruel goddess to despoil

My youth's anticipated hopes with such
A loveless spouse.—I had forgot, he waits
Me even now. I serve the Goddess Pasht,
Or lend my voice to hymn her praise at her
Bubastis festival? Nay; by my soul
I am too sick at heart to worship her,
Or bow myself before her altars' fires;
Too sick for this my latest, only love,
To give companionship to Potiphar.
I'll plead excuse of health, and bide me here:
And while my lord the cat-faced goddess serves,
With amorous artifice will I conspire
To rob Jehovah of this Hebrew's love.
O, Isis, hearken to my secret prayer! [*Rises to go out.*
Again my bond-youth comes to say my lord
Impatient grows with biding over much.

Enter JOSEPH.

Hath Potiphar grown weary waiting me?

JOSEPH.

Nay, lady; scarcely had I gained the utter hall,
Having made known to thee my master's will,
When from the Pharaoh came a messenger
Who bade my lord repair to Bubastis

Forthwith, with all the guard, to greet him there.
Then my lord turned, and said, Go tell
Thy mistress straightway I go hence to greet
The Pharoah coming to the festival.
And should the thing be mated to her mind,
Let her repair to Bubastis with all her maids
To pay her vows to Egypt's goddess-queen.

AMENSIS.

I am too sick with late-foiled hopes
To pay the goddess vows in anywise.
I'll bide me here, and gamble time with thee,
And chase the love-luxurious hours of night
With the delicious music of our hearts;
And we will quaff the intoxicating draught
Of sympathetic souls dissolved to words.
So thou wilt stay with me to comfort me.

JOSEPH.

I cannot, lady; for my lord's away,
And I meanwhile must all his will fulfil.

AMENSIS.

But am I not thy mistress? Art thou not
My slave, and must thou not do my hest too?

JOSEPH.

Yea, in such wise as I offend not God,
Nor bring dishonour on my master's name.

AMENSIS.

Who is thy God to find offence in love?
Dost say He's mightier than Egypt's Gods?

JOSEPH.

Jehovah, Israel's God, gives place to none.

AMENSIS.

What! wilt thou dare contemn my people's Gods
To whom the Pharaoh humbly bows the knee?

JOSEPH.

Lady, I utter nought against Egyptia's Gods.
I but extol Him whom my kindred serve.

AMENSIS.

Fear not; I was but wroth. I meant not ill.
My words are but the smoke of smothered fires.
Say thou wilt ravel this hope-tangled night
With me, then shall my heart be satisffed.

JOSEPH.

So great a wickedness I cannot do

And sin against my God. It must not be.
For, surely, would Jehovah visit me with woe,
And cast me forth from mine inheritance.
For, know, while in the outer court I stood,
Feasting upon thy passion-thrilling words
And yearning to fulfil thy rapturous wish,
My father, Jacob, in a vision came,
And thuswise to me spake, 'My son, my son
If thou consent to this iniquity
Which now thy wayward flesh doth prompt thee to,
For this untoward sin 'gainst Potiphar,
Albeit the darkness cover it, thy name
Which should hereafter with thy brothers' be
Graven, and jewelled with refulgent gems,
Upon the breastplate of our God's High Priest
Shall be struck out; for by this mighty sin
Shame and reproach should come to Israel.'
Then with his hand he smote me on the loins
And glided from my sight. It must not be.
Forego, O lady, this sin-charged desire
Lest it beguile thee to unrighteous ways. [*Going.*

AMENSIS *holding him.*

Heed not such mocking visions, lad;

They're but the phantoms of a wildered brain.
By Isis, I'll not let thee go until
Thou yield'st thee to my will.

JOSEPH.

Behold ! my lord
Wotteth not what is with me in the house.

[*Exit, leaving his garment in her hands.*

AMENSIS.

Stay, stay ! Come back !—What, hath he fled to mock
The love I prodigally have given him !
Ha, ha, he shall not slight the treasure of my soul,
And sport the choicest jewel of life
Which I would fain have decked him with. Ye Gods
My breast surcharge with all your vengeful ire
That in the gins thereof I may entrap this slave.
My mighty love hath turned mighty hate
Envenomed by the gall of foiled desire.
With this—I'll satiate my dire revenge.

[*She secretes the garment.*

POST MORTEM NULLA VOLUPTAS.

O FAIR, infatuated, wayward girl,
Low in the depths of thine unfathomed soul
Strange unembodied hopes do alway roll
Shaped by thy mind's tempestuous whirl.
O could I round my body twine a curl
Of thy bright chesnut hair, then in control
Of thy sweet love I'd grasp the whole
Of life's delicious joys ere death should hurl
His shaft of damp delusion through my breath,
Or ere he swathed in robes of fetid clay
This body rich with pleasures drawn from thee.
Clasp my love-famished lips as my soul saith,
We bide here but the pastime of a day
So we will blend our souls voluptuously!

THE DREAM OF CYBOREA.

Lo I dreamt last night when the moon was full
That the devil unrobed beside me lay,
That the Lord of Hell with kisses me loved,
And chafed my damp lips till the dawn of day.

A bitterer kiss ne'er tasted my lips;
It stung with the deadly poison of lust,
And stilled in my heart the current of love
Till the blood in my veins was parched as dust.

And he smote my lips with a maddening ire,
With a passion that joy makes full to slay,
And wasted love, and my love's delight,
Till my throbbing veins were as dull as clay.

And I thought he turned upon me and mocked,
And whispered the life he begot was lost;
That the mortal I then conceived in me
Would sin against Light and the Holy Ghost.

That Jehovah decreed before time began,
From out of his loins and my virgin womb
Should be born a man, like the sons of men,
Who should pine in the depths of endless gloom.

Then my heart was full of a burning grief,
My soul overwhelmed with a shame made chaste,
And I sorrowed till tears flowed fast like rain,
And the springs of my love were dried and waste.

Then I dreamt the dull grey light of the dawn
Unbidden despoiled the night of its fears,
And the shadows that bound the horizon's brows,
Were steeped in the crimson glow of the years.

And I saw on the mountains snowy feet,
Fairer than ever the prophet sang of;
And I heard on the breath of the morning sweet
The murmurous trill of the cushat-dove.

Then a low voice broke on my Fancy's spell,
And wailed with the wail of a bitter pain—
'Woe, woe to thee, mother, the blasts of hell
Have smitten thy fruit as a blighted grain.'

Then I in my terror arose and wept,
And lifted my voice to my people's God :—
Then the sun arose in the saffron east,
And the gleaners' songs were echoed abroad.

And I called the daughters of Kerioth,
And told them the vision that came to me :
But they mocked as is Israel's daughters wont.
Yet the fears thereof filled my memory.

And it came to pass when the ninth full moon
Made the purple sky with its pallor wan,
The soul on that night that my lord begat,
To my joy assumed the fair form of man.

Then I gathered together my nearest kin,
And we made us merry with those who came ;
For that day had the babe been circumcised,
And his father gave him Judas to name.

Yet betimes when the sombre shroud of night
Wraps my wearied spirit in balmy sleep,
I dream of the fearful vision of hell
And I press my boy to my bosom and weep.

THE DENIAL.

The Prophecy.

Scene I.—*The Last Supper.*

Peter.

Though all should be offended for thee, Lord,
For this thy word;
Though all men rise to smite;
Yet no offence of mine shall bring thee shame,
Whose holy name
Giveth my spirit might.

Jesus.

Verily, of a truth to thee I say,
Ere dawn of day
Vain shame shall sacrifice
Thy words, augmenting thy soul's coming woe.
Ere the cock crow
Thou shalt deny me thrice.

PETER.

Master, fain would I rather with thee die
Than thee deny.

DISCIPLES, *omnes.*

Yea, master, we would rather with thee die
Than thee deny.

PETER.

Did I not ev'n in blood
Prevail when all men railed, when Judas' kiss
Despoiled thy peace,
When thou encompassed stood
Rebuking me, and bade me my sword sheathe
Lest I with death
Should smite him whom thou healed,
Though unappealed?
Yet thou dost say thy name I shall deny
Ere morrow's sky
Be flushed with morning's breath.

JESUS.

Peter! I say, the cock shall not crow twice
Till thou deny me thrice.

THE DENIAL.

SCENE II.—*The Hall of the High Priest's Palace.* PETER *with Roman soldiers and Jews sitting round a brasier of fire.*

ROMAN SOLDIER.

What, hath this man some grievous evil wrought
That ye have brought
Him hither, armed with rods
As one who spreads sedition? Whence the cause
Hath he your laws
Defiled, or cursed your Gods?

JEWISH BYSTANDER.

I wot not what hath been the man's offence
Save his pretence
To sit on David's throne.
A vain imagination of a mind
Of alien kind,
Which some foiled hope hath sown.

A DAMSEL.

Nay, nay, I know; at least such wise I've heard
By some averred
That he for years hath been

Speaking against the Prophets and the law
Which hold in awe
All, but this Nazarene.
Further, he giveth out he our Messiah is,
Whom prophesies
Made sure of David's line
Would come to rule us with all-conquering power;
For whom this hour
Our drooping spirits pine.
Not such as this mean Galilean seems,
A man of dreams,
One of low ordered birth,
But one whose reign to us should bring
With him our king
Omnipotence on earth.
One of this fellow's followers art thou,
[*Turning to* PETER.
A dupe I trow.
Perchance when he shall rule
Our land, thou dream'st he'll share this kingdom, too,
With such as you
Whom knaves with hopes befool.

PETER.

Dost speak to me? I wot not aught of him,

Save what the dim
Uncertain rumours say,
A man of fancies, vain, above the law;
Him ne'er I saw
Before this very day.

DAMSEL.

How say'st thou this, when thy false words impeach
Thy northern speech!
Thou'rt, too, of Galilee—
Thy tongue bewrayeth thee. Was I not near
When Malchus' ear
Thy sword smote off? Thou'rt he.

PETER.

By Abram and the hosts of Heaven, I swear
I was not there,
Nor know I aught you say,
'Tis true, my northern speech proclaimeth me
Of Galilee,
From whence I came this day.

A JEWISH BYSTANDER.

What, man, wilt thou with eager, burning speech
Strive to outreach

What we ourselves have seen?
Thou art e'en of his sect, and these mine eyes
Disprove thy lies,
With him thou'st always been.

PETER.

By him who gave me life, I swear to thee
Thy memory
Doth make thine eyesight dim.
This Nazarene of whom you speak thus-wise
My soul denies,
I ne'er knew aught of him.

[*The cock crows.*

'TIS WRITTEN !

WRITE me a song asked me, one,
  Write me a song that shall be
Sweeter than honey and wine,
  Sweeter than sweet harmony !

Tell of some purer delight
  Joyous and fiercer than love's ;
Purer than water or light,
  Purer than kisses of dove's.

Fiercer than storms, or than fire,
  Fiercer than hell or hell's pains,
Fiercer than passion or lust,
  Fulfilling its feverish gains !

Though sweeter, fiercer, and purer
  Than honey, or passion, or light,
Its joys must be stronger and surer
  Than earth's most stateliest might.

Write me a chant like to this !
  Write it in poison or blood !
Write it? God write it, say I—
  God wrote as best he could.

In poisoned Death it was writ
  For God by the foot of Time,
Who writing, poisoned with it
  The author, God, with his crime.

Time mocked at God with his sin;
  Sin from his throne mocked and fell,
And rent with its barbarous din
  Delusion and death and hell.

Hell held the god that death slew,
  Delusion trammelling his kin,
Wasting blood, water and thew,
  Mingling salvation therein.

O Christ, thou mortal and God,
  Thou lord of a frenzied few,
They scourging with rope and rod
  Smote a man-god smiting you.

Meek, humble, lowly and poor
Are all, when need crieth must:
But God compassed all to make sure
The dire damnation of dust.

Ashes with ashes and dust
Moulded by Love into man,
Quickened by passionate lust
Fulfilled the work he began.

Fulfilling in life the rapt treason
Man fain would make one with his soul
Suppressing the conscience of reason
That nought but a God can control.

Visions convulsed into splendours
Uttered as leavened with life;
Phantoms surchargèd with terrors
Seasoned with horrors and strife.

God-Christ immortal and pure
For nine moons lay in a womb,
That he as man might endure
The anguish of death's and hell's gloom.

Mystical, mighty and strange
Unto the fancy of man
Seemeth this spectre of change—
God overwitting his plan.

Clothing His spirit in flesh,
Whetting His pureness with vice,
Casting the mantle of sin
Over the glory of paradise.

Charging his bosom with breath,
Wasting His potence with blood,
Piercing the arrow of death
Into His God-head for good.

Death, then, is fiercer than hell,
For struck it not at a god;
Fiercer than passion or lust
Scourged with a sharp-stinging rod.

Purer than kisses of doves,
Purer than water or light,
Death sifts the soul of its loves
Shuffling off sin in its might.

Sweeter than honey or wine
Is death in its bitterest hour,
Sweeter than love's hottest brine,
Luscious though bitter and sour.

God wrote by the foot of Time,
Man's portion is Life and Death;
'Twixt which, the shadow of crime
Is fanned by a burning breath.

Uncertain, unrighteous, withal,
Is that which springeth thereof;
'Tis fashioned to illumine and pall
Our lives—'tis lust, or 'tis love.

Either, or both, they're the same,
Shunted to serve our desire,
Burnished or tarnished in fame,
Both are the flames of one fire.

Then sweeter, fiercer, and purer
Than honey or passion or light
Is Death—and fearfully surer
Than morning that groweth from night.

THE LILY OF LOVE'S STREAM.

THERE is a purity in soul-born love
  Whose cloven grace flamed words can ne'er express,
  Though chastely passioned yet impassionless:
Its fires ethereal stolen from above
Where by the Seraphs' perfumed breath 'tis wove
  'Mid radiant smiles as souls mate-souls caress
  O'ershadowed by an eterne happiness.
O that such mystic beauties would thee move
To waken sympathy in thy warm breast,
  Then I might breathe thy charms deep in my soul
As fervourous passion sank to troubled rest
  O'ercome by sweets mine arid heart hath stole.
Drink on, sweet soul, Love's stream will constant flow
Till thou its lily in Elysium blow.

THE LILY OF LOVE'S PARADISE.

WHENE'ER I gaze on thy tourquoise eyes,
  Or on the damask of thy lily-face,
  Or with the pencil of my fancy trace
Thy perian beauty on Love's Paradise,
From my lorn breast my trembling spirit flies
  To grasp thy being in its rapt embrace,
  That I, entranced with love's voluptuous grace,
May heavenward wing where pleasure never dies.

Divinest creature of mine earthly joys,
  Thy virgin smile illumines my life's way,
Dispels its shadows, and the gloom destroys,
  Till from Fear's darkest night dawns brightest day.
May thy divinity more glorious shine
To guide my pen to sing of praises thine.

THE LILY OF MY HEART'S VALE.

THOU lily of the valley of my heart,
  Sublimest blossom that e'er bloomèd there,
  Feed on sweet flower, suspire love's air,
And to my soul thy fragrancy impart.
Nature in thee hath with its cunning art
  Moulded a form of grace supremely fair,
  And blent therein a soul sublime to share
With thy delicious life its holier part.

My soul subdued with love's absorbing ways,
  Abides the hours when smiles shall wreathe my hopes
With pleasure-bound and peace-inspiring days,
  When thy sweet spirit clasped in mine elopes
Beyond—where lilies and the lotus bloom,
Nourished by lovers' sighs—beyond the tomb.

AIDEN.

EACH year you live brings some new tie
To bind you closer unto life,
Some new-discovered sympathy
With which all worldly things are rife,
Some love that trelliseth the heart
With cunning art
Ere you depart
From hence, with grief and sorrow-laden,
For that mist-land—the spirits' Aiden.

Alas, in life there's much alloy,
It is the dross of mystic breath,
It palls our spirit's earthly joy,
That thought of thoughts—our certain death,
The dower of each sojourner here
Whate'er his sphere,
On sorrow's bier
From hence he passes, with grief laden,
For that mist-land—the spirits' Aiden.

Unto each heir of sin this is
The bane of his dread sorrow.
To-day our hearts are full of bliss;
But then there always is a morrow
Burthened with fear of sudden death
That lighteneth
The bark of breath
That sails from earth, with anguish laden,
For that mist-land—our spirits' Aiden.

Nathless each one some pleasure has,
A soul's robe by the angels wove;
Whate'er in life doth come to pass,
All hath this heavenly garment—love.
It wreathes the earth-bound heart with peace,
And will not cease
Though fears increase
As hence we're driven, regret-laden,
To that mist-land—our spirits' Aiden.

Although Death waits on every man,
Yet it makes dearer, far, one tie
Than any earthly joyance can—
The bond of human sympathy.

This is the sweet life casts away,
When on a day
Of pallid grey
We pass, with sorrow heavy-laden,
To that mist-land—our spirit's Aiden.

LOVE'S LAMENTATION.

'Twas in the days
Of youth's sweet ways
My heart grew flushed with love;
But jealous noon
Made ripe too soon
The fruits of bitter love.

Then fully shamed,
My heart exclaimed,
Ah cursèd be the morrow
That makes my foe
A lovely woe
That lurks behind to-morrow.

When sunny hours,
And blooming flowers
Burst forth from darkest night,
What hallowed pain
Makes us again
Resume the shades of dismal night?

By azure streams
Where silence teems
Its solemn pleasure o'er us,
Love's fainting hope
Shall soon elope
With days that glide before us.

If that beyond
Death's murky pond
We blend in mortal kiss
The barren lust
That cast the dust
Of discord on our kiss,

Or if we there
In rapture share
The sweets of luscious lips,
I'll wait on death
With bated breath
That I may press my beauty's lips.

A phantom rout
I sadly doubt
Are all these after joys ;

For earth in strength
Shall waste the length
Of these ethereal joys.

But life's degree
Is sympathy
That shrifts at dawn of youth,
Until too soon
Love lights at noon,
And dims the fire of youth.

Ah cloudy day
That made me prey
To woman's tears and graces,
Where art thou now,
When sad hearts bow
Beneath thy flaunting graces?

Hid in the gloom
Of memory's tomb;
To waken—when? Ah, never;
For chilly Death
Withholds the breath
That would make mock of Never.

How shall I sing
The joys that bring
A thrill to every soul?
How hold the erst
Made vows that cursed
The secret of my soul!

I'll wait on time
And sorrow's rhyme
To chaunt the hymn of heaven,
Thus waiting here
Shall bring me near
The mystic love of heaven.

Upon the wave
That lecks the grave
Shall treacherous love be drowned,
And the short breath
That cooleth death
Must pause when love is drowned.

Yet still 'mid fears
And fruitless years
Our hearts will pine for love,

Till in the glades
Of spectral shades
We blend in mystic love.

AN INVITATION.

COME, lisp the love that brought me bliss,
And stung me with a passioned kiss—
Long, long ago;
When you were belle and I was beau;
For then, my love, you loved me so,
Long, long ago.
Come kiss again that same old way,
And cheat old Time once more to-day.

Come, whisper me the first sweet word
That pierced me like a kindly sword
Long, long ago,
When you were belle and I was beau;
For then that old love stung me so,
Long, long ago.
Come, tell it me the same old way,
And cheat old Time once more to-day.

Come, murmur why I plighted you,
And told you why my love was true
Long, long ago,
When you were belle, and I your beau
Loved you so well—how well—you know—
Long, long ago.
Come, whisper this, and we will play
At making jealous, Time, to-day.

Come, sing me, sweet, the quaint old song
You sang me when your voice was strong
Long, long ago,
When you were belle, and I a beau
Would love you—with what love you know—
Long, long ago.
Come, sing it me, and I will tune
A new love-ditty to the moon.

Come, tell me with your laughing voice
How my desire made you rejoice
Long, long ago,
When you, my belle, and I, your beau,
Told each our loves in kisses—O
So long ago.

Come, laugh it forth, and I will tell
The art that bound me with love's spell
Long, long ago.

Thou canst not, love : Ah chilling age
Hath quenched the fire of passion's rage
Long, long ago.
But I, sweetheart, am still your beau,
And ev'n in heaven I shall be so
Ere long I know.
Then Love, disrobed of flesh and sin,
Its reign immortal shall begin.

Come, lay that head upon my breast,
Whose sunny hair my hands caressed
Long, long ago,
When you were belle and I was beau ;
For then my hand caressed you so :
Long, long ago.
And though our hair be silver grey
We'll cheat old Time in Love's old way.

THE WOOING OF LOVE AND HOPE.

A MADRIGAL.

Love, a fair youth went a-wooing, a-wooing
Hope, a fair maiden, to chase away
With sweet caresses, and far sweeter kisses,
April's showers, and sunshine in May.

Hope was a maiden a-longing, a-longing
For a fair youth to woo for a day,
And with caresses and honey-sweet kisses
Chase the slow hours of life-time away.

Love saw this maiden so lovely and gentle
By the gold rays of the setting sun.
"O," whispered Love to his soul in eve's silence,
"There is the maiden my heart hath won."

Hope, as she stood in the golden sun's shadows,
Saw this fair youth watch her tenderly.
"Ah!" murmured she to her soul in eve's silence,
"Would that that youth my lover would be."

Then the gods kind to them gave a meeting:
  Hope, ever first at her trysting place,
Chafed her true soul with new-wakened doubtings
  Lest her fair love should strange lovers chase.

But her love came, and they wooed, and they wedded
  When April's showers gave rose-buds to May,
And they each, wreathed with a mystical garland,
  Chase with their kisses life's sad hours away.

ALLEGRIA.

LAUGH when the light winds laugh with the sea,
Laugh when my true love laugheth with me,
Merrily, merrily, merrily.
When the new moon on a starry night
Kisses the waves with her liquid light,
And the pale stars are a-twinkling bright,
Then let my true love laugh with me
Merrily, merrily, merrily.

Laugh when the freshening breeze of the morn
Laughs with the laugh that of Love is born,
Merrily, merrily, merrily.
When the grey sky is robing in blue,
And the soft breeze breathes a love so true
Over the orient waves to you,
Then let my true love laugh in the morn
Merrily, merrily, merrily.

Laugh when the skylarks their ditties sing,
Skimming the heavens with an ether wing,
Merrily, merrily, merrily.
When their sweet notes in a smiling June
Enter the portals of heaven at noon
On the light airs of their dainty tune,
Then let my true love laugh with me
Merrily, merrily, merrily.

Laugh when the sun-down reddens the sea,
Sinking to sleep for eternity,
Merrily, merrily, merrily.
When golden gates in the crimson skies
In the soul-depths of my dazzled eyes
Shut in the glories of Paradise,
Then let my true love laugh with me
Merrily, merrily, merrily.

Laugh when the shades of the evening grey
Smile with the hope of to-morrow's day,
Merrily, merrily, merrily.
When o'er the crest of the western wave
Golden shadows with purple lave

As sunlight sinks to its daily grave,
Then let my true love laugh away,
Merrily, merrily, merrily.

Laugh when the nightingale soars at even
Bearing her vesper-song towards heaven,
Merrily, merrily, merrily.
When the low murmurs of stilly night
Float on the rays of the pale moonlight
Into the land that with dreams are dight,
Then let my true love laugh at even
Merrily, merrily, merrily.

Laugh when the lightning shivers the sky,
Heralding the thunder's melody,
Merrily, merrily, merrily.
When the sea leaps into billowy foam
Out of the depths of its ocean home
Kissing the clouds of its skiey dome,
Then let my true love laugh with me
Merrily, merrily, merrily.

TWO SONGS.

THE NIGHTINGALE'S SONG.

A NIGHTINGALE sat on a spray,
And she chirrupt the whole night long,
A melody ever so sad
That the old owl screeched to her song,
Ever so sad was the song she sang,
And through and through the woods it rang,
And Echo 'woke from his slumbers in fright
And whispered her song in the ears of Night.

THE SONG AS SUNG BY ECHO.

Ye fretful winds of the mournful night
Awake to my heart's sad strain,
Ere the daylight drawn by roseate Dawn
Make ye forgetful again.

Bereft by him for whom all my soul
Was poured into songs of love,
Beguiling my throat of its sweetest note
On a spray in the myrtle grove.

He heard my song's most impassioned strain,
And chirrupt a kiss on my breast,
Then with chirpings soft he allured me aloft
To his own high down-built nest,
Where all the night long I sang him love's song,
And hearkened to his behest.

O fret, ye breezes of mournful night,
Weep, weep, ye winds, and wail,
For my mate has taken my song and forsaken
His lover the nightingale.

* * * * *

That night the nightingale fell from her spray,
Still leaving the Echo ringing;
But it ne'er again shall wake to her strain,
For she broke her heart with singing.

The Maiden.

A maiden sat in a castle tower
  And she told to her soul her woe;
Her youthful heart was ever so sad,
  And the dog at her feet whined low.
Ever so sad was the tale she told,
And to her heart like a billow it rolled:
Then her soul's sigh woke from their hidden tomb,
And her woful tale told the midnight gloom.

The Song as sung by her Soul's Sigh.

Ye mystic strains that incite to love,
  Awake to my lorn heart's strain,
Ere the morrow cloys with its passing joys
  Your sorrow for my love's pain.

Bereft by him for whom all my soul
  Was steeped in a guilty love;
For whom my desire wasted all its fire
  Adown in the myrtle grove.

He told me his soul's most impassioned hope,
  And pledged his heart in a kiss;

And kissing he stole the gem of my soul,
And banqueted love with bliss ;
While the trees did weep in their midnight sleep,
And the viper wakened to hiss.

O hearts that grieve for a spoilèd hope,
Weep, weep to my spirit's sigh ;
For my mate has taken my love, and forsaken
Me now to languish and die.

* * * * *

That night the lorn maiden lay on her couch,
And seemed or slumbering or sleeping ;
But when day did break she did not awake,
For she broke her heart with weeping.

LINES.

FORGET not that ye lingered
By Gandolfo's tranquil lake,
When the halcyon calm of spring-time
Did sweet inspiration wake,
When the lull of moments shadowed
O'er the distant marge of years,
The rest of labouring mortals
In this vale of hopes and fears,
When the breeze in fragrant breathings
Whispered ever soft and low
Through the myrtles and the olives,
In the lovely sunset glow,—
"Be your lives like this with pleasures
And fair joyance alway full,
Ere the murmurs of life's tempests
Waste in death's eternal lull.
Be your lives with peace made fruitful
By true friendship's cunning ways,
And the light of faith illumine
Life with pure empyreal days."

THE BURDEN OF DECEIVED LOVE.

Two young lovers were we, fairly fashioned for love,
And we mingled our favours in kisses and vows,
And we thought that our souls stole their joys from above
As our lips hung on lips, and our brows pressed on brows.
Now love through my soul in its woe looks aghast,
As memory sorrowing mirrors the past,
To think that she lied and deceived me at last.

How she swore that the passion which welled in her veins
Would increase with love's years to a holier heat!
How that years red and withered with sorrows and pains
Could never make bitter her life's sweetest sweet!
Now love through my soul in its woe looks aghast,
As memory sorrowing mirrors the past,
To think how she lied and deceived me at last.

But she lied to encompass her secret desire ;
With her words she beguiled me to ask her to wed ;
For meseemed that her love was a terrible ire
That became ten-fold fiercer in love's nuptial bed.
Now love through my soul in its woe looks aghast,
As memory sorrowing visions the past,
To think that she lied and deceived me at last.

We are fools : not that man is a whit the less frail ;
But we hazard a life's peace on phantoms of truth,
And we vainly imagine that love is a veil
By the angels enwoven to glorify youth.
Now love through my soul in its woe looks aghast,
As memory sorrowing visions the past,
To think how she lied and deceived me at last.

We were wed in the month when the leaves crisp and red
On the autumn-struck boughs rustled low in the wind :
We were wed—would to God that the day saw me dead,
Or that never we twain at the altar were twinned !
Now love stricken sore in my soul looks aghast,
As memory sorrowing visions the past,
To think she beguiled and deceived me at last.

But the fruits of our lives are but dust at the core,
And the harvests thereof are the gleanings of sin;
Yet we nurture desire until Death through the door
Of our spirits' dark future would usher us in,
As love stricken sore in our souls looks aghast,
While memory sorrowing visions the past,
And thinks how love lies and deceives us at last.

Now my sunshine of life is all darkened with clouds,
And the hopes that were dazzling have lost all their glow;
For the vows that she plighted are wrapt in death's shrouds,
And are driven before the chill tempests of woe,
While love smote to death in my soul looks aghast,
And memory sorrowing dreams on the past,
To think that she lied and deceived me at last.

I'll nor curse her, nor bless her—I'll leave her to God;
Unto him I consign her requital and shame;
Yet the hoof of my vengeance, with fierce hatred shod,
On the pavement of hell shall betrample her name.
For love smitten sore in my soul looks aghast,
And memory sorrowing dreams on the past,
To think how she lied and deceived me at last.

PANTHEISTIC IMMORTALITY.

CAST me no more, ye ruthless spirits, back
  Upon those mystic dreams that mock the will
  With vain and shadowy bliss, until
Desire faints travelling this beaten track.
Nor urge me forward where my hopes, made black
  By sable doubtings, strive to kill
  With double death the lives that souls instil
With deathless joys or pains that never lack.

Fearful I wait my dissolution here,
  Sadly uncertain of hereafter bliss;
For verily I wot this earthly sphere
  Revolves no more for me when life doth cease.
Albeit I trow death makes us one with God
By blending soul in air and flesh with sod.

SIENA.

WHO founded thee upon those sun-kissed hills
That rise from out the valleys like green towers,
Steeped in the crimson hue of evening's hours
When heaven's dew trickling silvers all thy rills?
Who breathed on thee the spirit that instils
Life with love's fancies, and which dowers
Thy youth with peace in rich acacia bowers,
Whose leafy mantled boughs shade all thine ills?

'Twas love who whispered to the glowing skies
Thy praise, while zephyrs wafted soft and low
Through earth the varied joys of paradise
Thy hills of living green possessed, and so
Man, envious of the gods, with love combined,
And lovely Siena rose on high enshrined.

AREZZO.

AREZZO, to thy memories I wreathe
  The passioned pleasures of my veriest soul;
  And these I garland round thy cloud-bound goal
Which kisseth the bright blue of heaven: beneath
Thine ether canopy, pavilioned in a breath,
  I caught the sweet that holds me in control,
  Till my life's joys shall with the sin-blurred scroll
Of old delights be blotted out by death.

Cradle of many a songster that hath sung
  With rapture the old melodies of love!
    Here peerless Sgricci swept the tragic lyre,
And Redi, and Petrarca rose among
  Their kindred like to beacons from above
    Dazzling the world with their celestial fire.

TOMMASO SGRICCI.

In Memoriam.

Spirit divine! What magic did inspire
The theme from whence thy poesy was drawn?
For, like the mystic splendours of the dawn,
Or some new meteor fashioned with strange fire,
Thou cam'st to feed Melpomene's desire,
Fretting with life's keen soul that heavenly one
Who taught thy tongue earth's prismic words whereon
To cast thy burthen of poetic ire.

Genius incomprehensible! to thee,
Whose song still in thy city's memory's green,
I wreathe a chaplet in my country's rhyme,
And wake dead days to quickening sympathy;
Not dead—the glory of their dazzling sheen
Sheds lustre o'er the billows of revolving time.

THE SPEAKERS.

THE flesh saith:
We're born of love, the foaming must
Of life, to prove that we are dust.

The heart saith:
We're formed by God and human lust
That we may breathe and turn to dust.

Wisdom saith:
Primed well for death with hope, life's leaven,
We rest beneath the sod—that's heaven.

Love saith:
We woo and kiss to be partaker
Of carnal bliss—that's God, our maker.

Truth saith:
We chafe our souls with death's drear spell
Till fear ferments our will—that's hell.

Doubt saith :
We dim life's path with sorrow's wraith,
Damn souls and pray, and call that—faith.

Death saith :
We favour sin and nourish hate
To make love gins on God's estate.

Priests say :
That faith and love are but the price
Of joy above, yet call love—vice.
That man is born of love and God ;
And yet they scorn the thing they laud—
That is, would seem make light the treasure
Whereof they dream—their carnal pleasure.

IF?

WHEN the night of life is falling
O'er our once all-glorious years,
And the shades of death are palling
Time with wild tempestuous fears,
When dark shadows dim our vision,
And the memories of the past
Gather force from dire precision,
And our spirits look aghast
With faint hopes into that region
Whither longings come and go,
Where our kindred peers are legion,
Where abides or joy or woe,
One sweet thought shall with its spell
Gladden more than tongues can tell
As by time's desponding cliff
Hope divests itself of—if.

Haply, sweet shall be our meeting
After travel through dark ways,

And our earth-bound souls with greeting
  Shall break forth in mellow lays,
Then our hearts shall know not sorrow,
  Whispering fears not spoil our trust,
And the robes we wear we borrow
  Nor from sin nor mouldering dust.
Then shall we commune together
  Wandering round the throne of God,
With eternity our tether,
  Fearless of death's vengeful rod.
Come not this earth's joys are dull,
Waste with hope made terrible,
As we see our spirit's skiff
Wrecked upon the shoals of—if.

WHO?

WHO shall dispense to us sorrow,
Who give us earnest of pain,
Who gather tears to replenish
The fruits that make our lives twain?

Who shall despoil our to-morrow
With fears that tarnish and stain?
Who shred our hopes with new terrors
Ere pleasure come to us again?

Who shall from misery borrow
The dregs of life's raptures that strain
Through the sieve of regrets to empoison
The fair fruits of peace in the grain?

Who shall dare sow in the furrow
Of years the old seeds of disdain
To reap in the harvest of life-time
The tares of discomfort and gain?

Who shall drive forth the barbed arrow
That smites us to death on Time's plain,
That with our life's-blood maketh bloody
The stream that is lost in years' main?

Who shall consume us with sorrow,
Sorrow oppressed with our tears,
And then shall betray us with waiting,
And slay us with pestilent years?

Who shall upbraid us to borrow
Their joy for our death-smitten fears,
And mock our soul's woe with shrill laughter,
And eye us with scornful leers?

Who shall then say on the morrow,
When the mist of the dark morrow clears,
'We have requited with reason
The songs of the minstrels and seers?'

Who shall avenge in Time's furrow
The avenger of life with the spears
That pierce through the blackness of darkness
To the glory of brightness that cheers?

Who shall pursue the winged arrow
That bears to eternity's ears
The cries of our soul's desolation
As the gold-sand of life disappears?

Who shall purloin from life's sorrow
The laughter of visions made true
By light that out-travels night's phantoms,
And shadows that gather anew?

Who shall make peace with that morrow
Whose mornings are drenched with the dew
Of grief for years of old yesterdays
Emblazoned with Love's brightest hue?

Who shall pawn lifetime to borrow
From death its full harvest of rue,
While the seasons of sunshine and moonshine
Do ripen Love's harvest for you?

Who shall shed tears in the furrow
Of mirth, where its furrows are few,
Where the songs of the nightingale echo
The weird night-note of the kiou?

Who'll in his heart sheathe the arrow
That bears on its barb Hope's adieu,
And welcome the kiss of the traitor
That poisoneth life's pleasures—Who?

FAITHFUL.

I.

We both slumbered in the noontide,
  And the light winds breathed a song
To the memories of withered years,
  To the thrilling hopes that wrung
From my soul the sweets of pleasure
With a blithe and lissome measure,
  As I thought when we among
Mystic Druids' groves did wander,
  In love's springtime, years ago,
When our hearts were full of peace, love,
  And were strangers unto woe.
Then I loved you as the moon loves
  The placid stream at night,
And I dreamt of joy that veileth
  Passing sorrow from our sight;
    For you, love,
    Were true, love,

Through the ever-changing years;
  But, although our summer's past,
And old age brings other fears,
  I will love you to the last,
Till the shades of Time shall be
  In the twilight of our lifetime
Merged in immortality.
Until then, my sweet, with this— [*They kiss.*
Shall our spirits bask in bliss.

II.

As you slept the pine-trees murmured
  In a low and plaintive strain:
But my heart ev'n gathered pastime
  From the mournful sound, and fain
Would my soul in silent pleasure
With a blithe and lissome measure
  Whisper softly to my pain,
'Time shall blossom and be fruitful,
  Reft of all its transient woe.'
Then you and I shall hope, love,
  As we once did years ago;
And I'll love you as the breeze loves
  The stilly hours of night

When it wooes the sighing branches
With an amorous delight.
Then you, love,
Still true, love,
To your ancient plighted faith,
Shall make calm the surging fears
That with unabated breath
Swell the billows of the years,
Till the doubts of Time shall be
In the gloaming of our lifetime
Merged in immortality.
Until then, sweetheart, with this— *They kiss.*
Our true souls shall bask in bliss.

MARAH.

TELL me who shall confide in the mercy of God—
If mercy it be to embitter our days
With love that is treacherous, cruel, and shod
With leasing to gallop o'er foul-trodden ways.
I have loved, and have served with true love in my youth;
But the scourge of deception hath stricken me sore:
I have lived to bewail the sweet kisses of ruth,
And curse the sad moment when Love played me whore.

Ah this season of sorrow hath pierced my lorn soul,
And hath filled my life's cup overflowing with tears;
Yet the moment shall come when love in control
Shall fathom the depths of Time's measureless years.
She swore that the days of her love had not end;
She swore; but her oath was the foam of a lie:
She swore to beguile me to more than a friend,
And wrecked all my hopes with false sympathy.

But the years of requital must surely be hers
Ere her blood has consumed the fierce fevers of lust,
And the demons shall cling to her foul soul-like burs
Till the flesh of her loins be commingled with dust.
For a lustrum and moon did we husband and wive,
And I nourished the phantom that now strikes me low;
Howbeit, in her hate she did shuffle and strive
To bring my soul sorrow and heart-rending woe.

In my memory still bides the terrible oath
Wherewith she dispelled all my feelings of doubt,
And she weeping in anguish me plighted her troth,
And all passions sinister in me blotted out.
But she lied; for her tongue spoke a treacherous lie,
While her heart was all putrid with sin and deceit:
'Twas for this that I hazarded true love—and why?
To be poisoned and ruined by life's bitter-sweet.

By her side have I lain breathing peace from her love;
But the dream of my spirit was hollow and vain—
For she bartered her body to me but to prove
That the fiendish desire of union is gain.

And I loved her, believing her earthly desires
Concentred in me with a sanctified trust;
But the spirit of man is composed of false fires,
And the spirit of woman the foul dregs of lust.

By her side have I lain through the long winter nights,
Her head on my bosom lulling love into rest,
As I tutored to words my rapt spirit's delights,
And whispered to heaven my soul's choice behest—
To be crowned with the laurel of love in my death,
The laurel of love such as hers seemed to be,
To pass to that shadowy land with her breath,
And to mate with her soul for eternity.

I have slept by her side when the warm summer breeze
Through the curtains of night softly fanned our hot brows,
As I told her in whispers my visions of peace,
And with kisses most keen taught love to carouse.
O my God! how the foulness of all her deceit
Lies in heaps at the threshold of memory's gate,
Making festered the air, when the touch of love's feet
Crushes oaths and foul troths with a pestilent hate!

When the wreck of my life is complete on the sea
That casteth its surf on the quick-sands of years,
I shall curse that dire day when she uttered to me
The words of her hatred in cold alien ears.
But the thoughts of the heart often give the tongue speech,
Outwitting the treason it fain would conceal,
Thus it is we encompass the secrets of each,
And fathom love's shallows for woe or for weal.

In the land where the olive and vine yield their fruit,
Where the nightingale sings to the stars her sad song,
Where the kiou's weird note quells the voice of the lute,
There my spirit first tasted its desolate wrong.
How I loved her! O God!—but that passion is lost
In the dreary abyss of my silent despair:
Yea, I loved with true love till a summer-sent frost
Chilled the flame of my love in its tenement there.

Who can tell if the union of lives be a shame?
If the raptures of youth be for anguish or bliss?
For the darkness of doubts cast a slur on love's name,
And the night-shade of hatred makes deadly its kiss.

There be terrors that sever our hopes with dismay,
And terrors that flutter round days of regret;
But no fear so despoils the sweet joys of life's way
As the treason that teaches our loves to forget.

ALICE.

If our love were like that river
  By whose banks we have sat for hours,
It would flow with easy motion
Unto a boundless ocean
  Where the spangly spray wreathes bowers
  Rich with bright fantastic flowers,
  Making this short life of ours
    A long love-dream.

Yea, and it shall glide for ever
  In a solemn silent strain;
And its murmurless sad flowing
Shall swell high when passion's glowing
  With our love's delicious pain,
  Till in Time's exhaustless main
  It o'erfloods our souls again
    With life's love-dream.

VAIN DESIRES.

THE silent breath of evening sadly fills
  My heart with many a feverish fear
  Which draws from hidden wells the poisoned tear
That with a solemn dread my soul instils.
Borne on Night's sighs from yonder purple hills
  The beacon of my future wafts to cheer
  The fainting hopes that pant for waters clear
From heavenly founts, and life's love-flooding rills.

O for the sweet delicious draught of power
  That quenches parching thirst for fame,
That sprinkled on the heart's decaying flower
  Refreshes with a bright and glowing name!
O for the spell that holds in thrall the hour
  Which lights my future with a lasting flame!

AN IDYLL FROM MOSKHOS.

WHEN winds breathe softly o'er the bright green sea
My timid spirit then pavilions me;
The tranquil waters lure to their shore,
And earth for me hath not enjoyments more.
But when the white sea furiously resounds,
And on itself in foaming wrath rebounds,
When countless waves in rage the deep brine spurn,
To land and trees mine eager eyes I turn;
Then from the sea I hasten in my fears,
Since earth to me, securer, far, appears,
Where to thick forests I in rapture wing,
To hear the light winds through the pine-trees sing.
Surely the fisher leads a toilsome life,
His house a ship now tossed by billowy strife,
On fickle seas he toils from day to day,
Wherein the fish are but deceitful prey.
For me sweet sleep, let that my portion be,
Beneath the broad leaves of the plantain tree,
Where to rejoice with unaffrighted ear
In listening to the spring that murmurs near.

LINES WRITTEN NEAR TORRE-DI-QUINTO.

O how the skylarks sing their melodies of praise,
And hallow nature's work in spring-time's opening days!
Would that our lives for aye could breathe such floods of bliss,
And raise our sinking souls with such sweet joy as this!
Delights with magic power from this entrancing calm
Creep o'er my surging thoughts and lend to life a balm.
The fitful air, in sighs, fans on its ether wings
The hum of distant life, the toil of mortal things,
The hopeful pleasure lent to every throbbing breast,
And the small voice that saith, 'The wearied shall have rest.'

Sweet are the hopes of earth instilled in human kind
Made fruitful with desire to nourish every mind.
Thus drawing man to God by doubt's usurping power,
Hope lends fair faith the strength that mocks life's fleeting hour.

Alas that such strange fear so sadly soon departs,
Despoiled by vengeful death, to give us barren hearts!
Alas that we of earth, the offspring of an hour,
Are like the tender bud that's nipped by winter's shower,
The shadow of a cloud that fades in sunlight's beam,
Or as the evening's breath, or as a sleeper's dream.

We're like the faint-like smile that heralds morning tears,
The clasp of death-damp hands that welcomes but not cheers;
E'en as the dust that time makes of a conqueror's bays
When tolls the passing-bell for life's accomplished days.
Such, such are we of earth, the spoil and wreck of fears,
Cast here upon a strand that shelves to endless years.
O may we pause in death by heaven's expansive sea,
And guide our bark of love safe to eternity.

REMEMBRANCE.

To forget that bright day and that hour
Unto me it were bliss;
But the draught of remembrance is sour,
And bitter the kiss.
The kiss that still tingles my lips
Till my blood foams and seethes,
And the visions of pleasure eclipse
Love while life's spirit breathes.

Come, soul! fashion forth thine old joys,
Tell them once and again,
Till I chafe the dire moment that cloys
My spirit with pain.
Tell them low; lest the winds waft them far,
And I faint for their fires;
Tell them low; lest their old pleasures mar
New-fashioned desires.

Remember! O God! not remember
The joys that were mine
When my soul, fire-flushed like an ember,
Was drunk as with wine!

Not remember that day when our union
Made our spirits seem one,
And our bloods in love's holy communion
Sang love's sweetest song!

In that meadow where passion commingled
The sweets of desire,
My lips pressed her lips as joy tingled
My heart with new fire.
O she clasped me right close to her bosom!
Bound my soul with her arms!
And fell like a frost-bitten blossom,
Laying waste all her charms.

I have seen in autumn the bowers
Made bare of their leaves;
I have seen in the summer the flowers
Mowed down with the sheaves;
I have seen the regrets of the morrow
Fall fast on to-day;
But never the joys that we borrow
From love pass away.

We murmured the sweet notes of pleasure
As our hearts sang of love,

And fathomed its depths with a measure
Of peace from above.
We dallied with sunshine till even,
Mocking fears with light laughter;
For finding on earth our life's heaven,
We forsook life's hereafter.

Should I live till years wither hope,
I will think of that day;
Till the pastimes of memory elope
With the sun's latest ray;
On the margin of ages I'll whisper
The anthems of peace,
And passing away sing the vesper
Of love's lorn decease.

What! forget the rapt moment of love,
When in eyes of soft grey
I sounded her soul-depths to prove
If lust were at play!
When passion beguiled me to suck
From her rose-lips their dew,
Till the vision of fancy was struck
With love's mystical view.

Then clasping her forehead, I smote it
With kisses delirious and keen,
With kisses whose fervour denoted
Her love was my queen.
Her white neck I flecked in love's wrath,
Until sparks seemed to rise :
Thus in passion we plighted our troth,
With fire leaping forth from our eyes.

O God ! if it sin be to nourish
Such a love upon earth,
Smite my body with death till it perish
For giving sin birth.
The shades of false love shall cry out
To their God in despair,
When the demons in laughter shall shout,
Making feast on such fare.

If e'er I forget thee, O day
Most sublime of my youth,
Let my tongue cleave in speechless dismay
To the roof of my mouth.
Or ever remembrance thereof
Be shred with regret,

Let my loins, forsaken by love,
Their cunning forget.

Ye dreams that lend beauty to life
With intensified power,
With your burthens of splendours make rife
Time with love's joys an hour.
With memory chasten new sorrows
Till grief speed away,
And the peace of sufficient to-morrows
Bury love's yesterday.

Ah! why doth love live to be slain
By the serpent of hate?
Why suffer the wrath of disdain
To be vanquished by fate?
When the dire cruel pangs of remorse
Shall consume my lone heart,
What song shall memory rehearse,
Ere from earth I depart?

O God! how my heart pants to drink
Of those virginal springs,
Whose fountains were full to the brink
Of earth's transient things!

How I thirst for a draught of that bowl
That was strange to my lips,
Till drunk with its nectar, my soul
From the bonds of grief slips.

She seemed when her burthen of love
She oped to desire,
A being immortal that strove
With time to conspire
'Gainst the terrors that fall from delusion
And sin-smitten breath,
The fears that with black-winged intrusion
Make poisoned love's faith.

How we gathered delight in our laughter,
Overreaching the hours
Of the present with hopes of hereafter,
When love in his bowers
Would sing to the night-winds a chant
For pleasure's increase,
As our souls on love's pastures would pant
For the waters of peace.

Call it back from the tomb of dead years,
That love-laden July!

Call it back from oblivious spheres,
Till its sad spirit sigh!
Call it back till its glory dispel,
With its raptures intense,
Hate's phantoms arisen from hell,
Alluring each sense!

Call it back, lest the tempests of wrath
Blast its robings with fire!
Call it back till our soul's plighted troth
Re-awake our love's ire!
Call it back in a vision or dream,
In a mirage of tears!
But, O God! call it back till love seem
The old love of dead years!

How the fleet-winged moments were bathed
In the sunlight of smiles,
And the dreams of our spirits were swathed
With the love that beguiles!
How the luscious faint airs of delight
Filled those amorous hours,
Ere its harvest were stricken with blight,
By unspeakable powers!

Alas, that our loves had a birth !
Or that ever man sinned !
Spreading desolate woe on the earth
Like a pestilent wind.
A wind laden heavy with lust,
And pollution, and death ;
A wind that turns beauty to dust
With its pestilent breath.

Or ever the days saw love mated
With flesh and desire,
To be wasted with treason and sated
To death on lust's pyre.
Or ever we garland love's summer
With chaplets of truth,
For it wains with the song of the hummer,
And they wither with youth.

Could I cull those sweet blossoms of passion
That bloomed in my heart,
I would wreath the new years in old fashion,
With love's cunning art.
From the joys of the past I would borrow
My burthen of bliss,

And implant on the brow of my sorrow
A rapturous kiss.

Mouldered long in the past are the joys
That gladdened my years ;
For a pleasure forgotten destroys
Life, ere time disappears.
Still my old love shall slumber and linger
As memory's dower,
Till Death with his lank withered finger
Beckon life to his bower.

E'en there shall I vision earth's love,
If my spirit still be
A soul in the shadowless grove
Of eternity.
There, too, shall remembrance regret
That love-surcharged day,
When the keen edge of youth-tide was whet
With passion to slay.

When my heart burthened heavy with love
Found a rest in release,
And the kisses with which she did prove
Her soul's joy gave me peace ;

For we lingered with love for a season,
Trammelled Hope with sweet days,
And, with rapture that knoweth no treason,
Taught our loves to wake praise.

How I loved her, sure, God wotteth well;
For His spirit was by
When I told all my heart fain would tell
In its ecstacy,
When my vision of life was made full
With the beauty of truth,
And my soul in its joyance did cull
The choice harvest of youth.

Come the Spoiler of time soon or late,
I will hold by that day,
Till I see through the mystical gate
Of death glide away
The phantom of life and of love,
Robed in sheen of new birth,
As the angels that watch from above
Pine for love that's of earth.

Then the soul of Extasia shall guide
My faint spirit to bliss,

And we clothed as a bridegroom and bride
Shall salute with a kiss,
And we'll pause by the tomb of dead years
Till their waste spirits sigh,
And we see in a mirage of tears
That love-laden July.

TO EXTASIA SLEEPING.

SLEEP, beauty, sleep! the peace of earthly love
Envelope all thy spirit's phantasies,
And the empyreal bliss of heaven absorb
The fears that fain would vanquish all thy hopes!
Extasia, love, for thee no holier name
Could shroud itself in speech to tell thy joys.
For thee the yearnings of my heart are full
And throbbing to be blent with thine, sweetheart.
Extasia, loved one, thou for whom my soul
Hath chased its varied elements to love,
For thee fair Hope bedecks itself with faith,
And the bright days of future years do fringe
Our love's horizon, viewed o'er billowy time,
With their ethereal splendour, as the night
Of our live's time, clothed in its purple robes,
For ever sinks to its eternal rest.
Sleep softly, sleep! May thou, whose sunny smiles
Hallow the byeways of my every care,
Find in the dream-land, whither thou hast fled,

New pleasures on the which to feast thy soul,
And conjure with the magic of their joys
Some new delights wherewith to trellis life—
Thy life and mine, a double life made one.
Rest, sweetheart, be thy slumbers calm and sweet,
And all thy dreams a reflex of that love
Which thou didst plight me in the Druid's Grove.

THE SONG OF THE SONS OF GILEAD.

SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN SUNG BY THE HEBREW YOUTHS, AS THE VIRGINS OF ISRAEL, ACCORDING TO A YEARLY CUSTOM, WERE ON THEIR WAY TO LAMENT THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH.

FAIR as the valley's pale lily
  Ripe for the harvest of love,
Ripe for a sacrifice holier
  Than ever the priests dreamt of;
Full as the fruit of the pomegranate,
  Blooming with fulness of days;
Seasoned with passionate longings
  For love and its mystical ways.

Virgin and daughter of Israel,
  Virgin well-favoured for joy,
Whose laughter made merry our sorrow,
  And our lives lacking sorrow's alloy.
O for the days of her beauty,
  That glowed with a transient fire
Of love that's eternal and mighty,
  A love that with God did conspire

To yield her to woe sprung from folly,
  Dire folly made bitter by death,
From a vow that encompassed her pleasure
  And poisoned her sweet-savoured breath !
Our judge and her father, well harnessed
  For all the proud glories of war,
Thus vowed to the God of our fathers :
  "Whoso in peace-offerings are
First in their welcomes to greet me,
  First in their favours to pay,
These will I yield for oblation,
  For sacrifice meet will I slay,
If without fail thou'lt deliver
  The Ammonites into mine hands,
Spreading dismay through their armies,
  And making us lords of their lands."

And it came unto pass in the harvest
  That Israel's warriors strove
With the sons of the daughters of Ammon,
  And the priests of the gods of the grove.
And they smote them ; o'ercoming in battle
  The lords of their race and their kin,

Smote them sorely with death and despoiled them
From dawn until evening set in.

Jephthah, our judge, rose and smote them :
The son of the Gileadite
Arose and scattered their armies,
And put our oppressors to flight;
For had he not pledged to the Lord
The joyous first-fruits of his peace,
If Jehovah would overcome Chemosh
And the might of our land would increase ?
So the children of Ammon were stricken
From Minnéth's wheaten fields to Aroer,
Ev'n to Abel, the plain of the vineyards,
With death and discomfiture sore.
For forth in the name of Jehovah
Went the war-men of Israel,
Lead by Jephthah, the son of the harlot,
And the king of the Ammonites fell.

Then she who was Jephthah's sole daughter,
With timbrels and dances came out
From Mizpeh, the home of her father,
To greet him with song and with shout,

To greet him with love and with laughter
For peace through our land sent abroad,
By the swords and the spears of our armies,
By the might of our judge and our God.

But the vow which he vowed to Jehovah
Made bitter the joy of his soul,
The oath which he sware in his rashness,
Should Israel Ammon control.
For a vow to the God of our fathers,
A pledge for a peace made in strife,
Must be quitted; for who durst forswear him
When the altars are thirsting for life?

On her doorstead in Mizpeh stood Seila,
Made one with the secret of death,
As the sweet song of maiden rejoicing
Empoisoned the low sighing breath
Of that evening that bowered the morrow
With passionate pleasure and gloom,
The morrow that brought forth a sorrow,
Enwrapt in eternal gloom.

Bring ye forth, O ye daughters of Gilead,
  Your cymbals to gladden the years,
Sing a song to Jehovah with dances,
  And mingle your joy with your tears;
For a virgin made full the oblation
  Of a war-vow in Israel,
When Jephthah, our judge, o'ercame Ammon,
  And woe on our enemies fell.

ALLON-BACHUTH.*

I.

We stood by an oak in the moonlight,
My lips were pressed close to her brow—
O the love that then fettered my spirit
Waketh bitter remembrance now.
But love like the moonlight soon fadeth
When the dawn of strange morrows is shed
O'er the shadows of mutable longings,
That waste when our life's hopes are dead;
For the changes of night bring the morrow,
And the changes of love bring us woe
Ere ever we garner the first-fruits
Of the seeds that in youth-tide we sow.

II.

We met there to sweeten our parting;
But grief made our young hearts feel sad,

* אלון בכות: The Oak of Weeping.

And with kisses and vows we made wanton,
Till our souls for a short span felt glad.
And we pictured the future as glorious
With all the bright splendours of trust,
Never dreaming that life hath its changes,
And time turneth all things to dust;
For the changes of love bring us sorrow,
And the changes of life bring decay,
And the hopes that make gladsome our lifetime
Fast fade like the shadows of day.

III.

'Tis sad that the breathings of Winter,
Wafting o'er the new buddings of Spring,
Nip the flower-flushed bud ere it blossom,
And blight to the flower-fields bring.
'Tis sad that the clouds of deception
So soon pall our new-plighted vows,
And the look that made holy the compact
Fades away with the lifting of brows.
But the trothings of yesterdays borrow
A treasure from years gone before,
And the kisses that beautify youth-tide
Have a butterfly's glory—no more.

IV.

She wept, whispering low, 'O, I love thee.'
Then vowed that though years should glide by
Her heart to her words should prove faithful;—
But she wot well she uttered a lie.—
Then I kissed her in rapture believing
The passionate power of her love,
And I cherished awhile the sad parting
That showed me the treasures thereof.
But hope that doth flatter the morrow
Oft poisons the draught our soul sips,
And the goblet that holds the choice potion
May fall from our grasp near our lips.

V.

I thought, surely, love, such as hers is,
Gains strength in the fulness of days,
Till hallowed with mystical glory
It is wreathed with empyreal bays.
I said, 'If the future divide us,
The tryst of our loves shall be death.'
And she answered 'twixt sobbings and kisses,
'My love shall endure with my breath.'

But the vows that we utter in sorrow
Trickle fast from our tongues, like our tears:
When the anguish of moments hath vanished,
Then our vows with our love disappears.

VI.

We knew with the light of the morning
Our lives should be parted a spell;
But Hope buoyed our hearts with sweet visions
As with kisses we bade each Farewell.
The kisses with which I did chasten
The doubtings that palled on my soul
Were as spray to the billows of passion
When the tempest of Love's in control.
But the tempests of time waste with surging;
To a storm succeedeth a calm:
So, forsooth, to the wound of my spirit
A strange love will heal it with balm.

VII.

And I looked in her eyes of soft hazel,
Those eyes through which memory gleams,
And meseemed that they flashed with faith's glory,
And caught their bright glow from Love's beams.

Ah vain was that last dream at parting
That taught my sad soul there to see
A light that illumined them never,
At least ne'er illumed them for me!
But the wish that the heart most desireth
Hope phantoms, eclipsing our fears,
As the gloom of despondency darkens
The twilight of fast-fading years.

VIII.

'Tis a year since we stood here and parted—
By this oak of weeping and vows—
And I think, was our parting a vision,
Our kisses the birds in the boughs?
Ah no; for I hear them still singing
The theme of their last year's tune,
And I see through the leaves and the branches
The pale liquid light of the moon.
But the moon she doth change in her season,
And the birds change their mates in the spring,
And the troths that we plight in our youth-tide
With the dawn of new morrows take wing.

TO SIR ROBERT PRESCOTT STEWART, KNT.

FOR many years we have not spoken;
  Belike may never speak again;
Still this my song shall be a token
  That honoured merit never brings disdain,
And with this melody is broken
  The last false spell that gave me pain.

The sun's more glorious in the even,
  More glorious ere it sink to rest,
That it may gild the morrow's heaven
  With all the ambient splendours of the west;
So do new honours aptly given
  Relume with beauties long possest.

A sweeter theme I might have taken
  Whereon to try my Muse's skill;
But none more worthy to awaken
  The withered old years and the mystical

Sweet music of a lyre, forsaken
That I another harp might trill.

Since first I lisped I have been singing:
Two heavenly songs have been my theme:
Still as I sing my heart is clinging
To those old days long vanished as a dream,
Thus to my memory's vision bringing
Hopes that have foundered in Life's stream.

Forego awhile that bitter feeling,
That feeling of antipathy;
For autumn's years o'er you are stealing
And summer's years for me soon cease to be.
Now as the echoes of this song are pealing
Let Peace be memory's alchymy.

Thy country's honoured in bestowing
On thee a gift—less than thy due;
For Genius like to thine in glowing
Honours thy country, not thy country you.
Ev'n as a fount in sunshine flowing
A rainbow intercepts the view.

Thy country's gift lasts but a season,
  Endures while life's endowed with breath,
It mocks then with an untoward treason
  When Time and Hope are swallowed up in death;
But what thou giv'st endures while reason
  Thy country's weal encompasseth.

Be thy life's days full fraught with pleasure:
  A hoary head thy laurels be!
Would I could give thee thy full measure
  Of praise! for thou, Stewart, once wert just to me;
Therefore, as pastime in my leisure,
  I trellis these few lines for thee.

LO-AMMI.*

INSCRIBED TO CITIZEN ALGERNON C. SWINBURNE.

I.

SHALL the red hand of hot revolution
Rear the banner of schism and death,
And the dæmon of faithless delusion
Reek on us the dregs of his breath.

II.

Scourge thus bitterly sons of a nation
That would cut off a worthless crew
Who would spread o'er our land desolation,
Would build up to ruin anew?

III.

Bound with shackles of fraud and deception,
Saturated with hate and distrust,
Blind to right through distorted perception
They exalt wrong with libertine lust.

* לא עמי: Not my People.

IV.

Their bloody berretto and banner
With impious hands they would raise,
Stamping out of our land truth and honour,
And the pride of omnipotent days.

V.

As a vulture o'er carrion doth flutter
To rend it with cowardly swoops,
So ye at our Albion would utter
Black treason through innocent dupes.

VI.

Justice—Death crush such radical ravings
They are prompted by maniac wit:
They'd have blood-draughts to satiate their cravings—
Let them drink till they're drunk with it!

VII.

Pour it forth till a new reign of terror
Shall succeed to the notes of such chaunts
Whose reasonless rhymes do make error
Stand rampant 'mid holier haunts!

VIII.

Let the leal iron-shod heel betrample
The heart of inflated design!
Make the deadly distortion a sample
For fools fed on offal of swine!

IX.

We are Celts, ye are Norman or Saxon:
'Tis we pay delusion's dire debt
While ye smile on our deeds, as we wax on
In wrath—your ambition to whet.

X.

We are free, and freeborn was our mother,
The Mother of Liberty she;
But ye would set brother 'gainst brother,
Making bondsmen of those that are free.

XI.

Back, ye flaunting intruders! Ye goad us
Picturing ills that ne'er had a birth,
And with desperate grievances load us
That for us ne'er had being on earth.

XII.

But perchance ye deluders may perish
By the halter which hangs in the gloom;
And the fate that ye preach we should cherish
Awaits you—a martyr's your doom.

November 23, 1867.

MANIE TENZIE.

'Tis much, 'tis little, 'tis enough
For this our peace to know we're loved!
And yet 'tis more than love is worth
To love where Love has faithless proved.

'Tis much to ask, 'tis more to have
The faith that binds two hearts in one;
But faith is frail, and hope is strong,
And Hope will bide when Faith is gone.

'Tis little when we hazard all
The wealth of time and worth of fame
For such a phantom joy as love,
A joy in nought save in the name.

It is enough for man to hold
In trust for life a part of God:
'Tis little, much, ay 'tis enough
To bow beneath so kind a rod.

I loving lost a love—from what?
From loving over-well I ween:
Ah, Mary, you can sympathize
From all that your bright eyes have seen.

From all your ears have heard me speak—
Vows full of earnest, full of truth,
Sincerely uttered unto her
Whose heedlessness made bitter youth.

Dear heart! when Fancy bears my thoughts
To thee and thy sweet smile to-day,
I bear the sorrows of the past,
And chase malignant hopes away.

Aspiring peace burns fiercely here—
O God! but peace 'twill never be;
For all my hopes lie as a wreck
Upon life's boisterous billowy sea.

Ah, Manie, you are young and gay,
Too young to be despoiled of love;
For you are jocund as the May,
And gentle as the turtle-dove.

I loved you once; I love you still:
We were not born for spouse or wife;
But this I trow shall bring me bliss,
I'll love you while God gives me life.

You're budding, sweet; I've bloomed and bled
In ardent love's most direful fray.
God grant that when Love blooms for you
'Twill blossom till your dying day.

The leaves are green, they shall be red
And canker-eaten ere they fall;
But then that closes their sad year
As closes life's sad year for all.

She whom I loved beguiled me sore:
Well—pleasure's days for her shall gloom—
E'en ere the noontide of life's sun
Her love shall find a living tomb.

Could I dispel the future's clouds
That gather darkly on my ways,
Forsooth, mine eyes would weep to see
The desolation of those days.

Days when her heart oppressed with grief
  Shall bitterly repent in tears
The shame she cast upon our love
  When it was robed in virgin years.

Perchance when we shall meet at compt
  A secret voice reproaching her
Shall shew the burthen of her soul,
  And cast her forth a perjurer.

Then shall my spirit clasp her soul,
  Impress it with the kiss of heaven,
While voices chant the thrilling song
  That shews earth's perjured love's forgiven.

You, Mary, knew our holy pledge,
  You knew that promise brought me bliss,
And you remember how she broke
  The oath she plighted in a kiss.

I wot the lustrum of her love
  Shall waste itself with other fires:
Then shall she looking back regret
  The slighted joys of old desires.

I once had thought to feast revenge
In working out some bitter hest;
But now that dire desire is dead,
And all my wrath's for aye at rest.

Come, trust me, if one fear you have,
Ev'n one, if but a shadowy doubt,—
Though heaven contend, and hell array
The pain that wounds you I'll blot out.

You well remember how the tongue
Of lying slander blurred my fame!
'Twas heralded in hate about
To blast a fair unstainèd name.

I ne'er forgave an injury—
But one wherein your love I ween
Partook a part to vanquish hate
And dire revenge that reigned supreme.

I ne'er forgave an injury—
Save that—because my spirit knew
Your heart would fain have given me peace—
Then for her sin why visit you?

As long as life shall be my dower,
Though memory should be crisp and sere,
The alien tongue that slanders me
I'll hunt through Winter's marsh and mere.

The springtime comes on zephyr's wings
To scatter joy broadcast o'er earth;
But I have seen in joy the seed
Of sorrow have a bitter birth.

The valleys and the mountains sing
When summer stealeth from the south,
As sang my heart when kisses bloomed
For me upon her luscious mouth.

Consider how the lilies grow,
They toil not, neither do they spin;
Yet loves as fair as lilies are
Do weave themselves a robe of sin.

Tell me, can your memory stray
Back to those long, sweet summer nights,
When you, and she, and I beguiled
The hours away with love's delights?

Enough! enough! the past is o'er
For aye, whate'er be sung or said
Old years consume old memories,
And dead men lie beside their dead.

How youth with hopes doth flatter us!
Yet who would change those flattering hours
With all their cunning sympathies
For days we durst not think as ours?

Ah, Manie Tenzie, you are young,
You wear not yet an aged heart,
Hope wreathes for you a garland fair,
More beautiful than human art.

If, when the winter of your life
Hath chilled your blood with icy fears,
You think upon those yesterdays
Your soul, perchance, will thaw to tears.

Then shall a joy intense, supreme
A moment flutter round your heart,
And you will fashion in your dreams
Those buried loves ere you depart.

Alas! Time ever leads us on
To lands where hope is lost in gloom,
And love forsakes the sweets of earth
To waste within the silent tomb.

Mayhap when Death shall smite our lives,
The loves of earth shall side by side
Assume the mystic robes of peace,
Each with its empyrean bride.

'Tis comely to esteem man's work;
'Tis comely—so are sin and love;
But sin despoils the aspiring soul,
And love shews man the dross thereof.

'Tis years since I have shed such tears
As now flow from my throbbing eyes:—
Remembrance is the bitter cause—
The dream of olden memories.

To-day with sunny smiles you warmed
My heart, as only such smiles can,
And by the beams that glowed therefrom
Was fired the wish that made me man.

Now let the past be sepulchred
  Deep in the abyss of old deeds done,
Where all the joys of youthful hopes
  Are blurred by blank oblivion.

Or let it rest beyond the spheres,
  Beyond the power of ruthless time,
Where angels bury earth's regrets
  'Mid all the flowerets of that clime.

Where sunlight ever shining gives
  Eternal splendour to the days,
Where hope despoiled gives place to peace
  In Paradise's mystic ways.

Where halcyon breezes fan the brow
  Of mortals who o'er treacherous seas
Have fluttered past the gates of hell
  To feast on immortalities.

There, hallowed by a bondage sweet,
  Our old delights and old desires
Shall murmur to the eternal stars
  The raptures of love's passioned fires.

POSTSCRIPTUM.

I thank the tongues that perjured me ;
For though keen sorrows came thereof,
I hid them in Extasia's heart,
And lost them in her boundless love.

BETRAYED.

CONFIDING love e'en at the best
Is but a sad and sorry jest.

And so thought May when last we met,
Poor May! in long dead years my pet;
The sweetest, prettiest, little maid
That ever in the hayfield played;
Her sunny curls and hazel eyes
Beamed with the glow of paradise.
How often in her baby bliss
She has raised her lips to me to kiss!
How oft the boy in manly strife,
Who conquered, claimed her for his wife!
But that was fifteen years ago,
And time it changes mortals so.
Some steadfast hearts it breaks with pain,
And some grief-rent it heals again.

The heart to-day that knows not sorrow
May be an aching heart to-morrow,
And the sweet smile that is love's token
May flutter round a heart that's broken.

I thought that when we met last night
I had passed beyond her memory's flight,
That care and shame, and surging years
Had drowned the past in floods of tears,
And that those days of youthful bliss
Were lost in lorn forgetfulness.
Though robed in many a silken woe
To me she seemed when long ago
I kissed her lips and called her 'sweet,'
As many now do in the street,
To me she seemed the same fair thing
As when she round my neck would cling,
And ask me for another kiss
In her ingenuous simpleness,
As fire danced in her hazel eyes
With all the sheen of paradise.
She seemed the same, yet, ah, so pale—
But then the flesh is very frail,
Though the heart be strong the body's weak,

And soon paints sorrow on the cheek,
And though our lips in laughter lave
We may be yearning for the grave.

I had heard that love had led astray
My pretty, gentle, little May,
That such a sinful life she led
'Twere better, far, that she were dead.
Her shame 'twas told me half in scorn,
With pitying words that like a thorn
Probes to the heart and stings to death,
And poisons with its virtuous breath,
Such pity as proclaims the shame,
And blasts the frail one's earthly fame,
Such as would say, "Behold and see
How pure I am!—a sinner she."
Then pitying still their sister's fate,
They 'gainst her shut shame's refuge gate
O would that ye of Christian name
Would Christ-like pardon such sad shame,
Or ere ye think to scorn your kin
Look well if ye be free from sin!
Last night was foggy, wet, and dull,
But May, though pale, was beautiful;

And when I spoke a smile serene
Lit up her face with hallowed sheen.
And as a rose-leaf stains when crushed
With much caressing, so she blushed
As if her heart's-blood, spent with pain,
Resumed its wonted fires again;
For still beneath that front so pale
Lay arts to tempt love to assail
The barriers of her secret blisses
With liquid speech and luscious kisses,
And through the pallor of disgrace
Love still illumed her lovely face,—
The same old face of years ago;
But time hath changed it sadly so.
O God, 'tis painful when we look
On those who vice's ways rebuke,
Not by a cruel word or sneer,
But by a sunken eye and tear,
A mud-splashed dress, a hidden sigh,
The tell-tales of true misery,
A downcast look, a vacant laugh,
The draughts that only sorrows quaff,
And the heart's prayer by anguish set,
'God teach us only to forget.'

May's soul seemed as she spoke to me
Full of the springs of sympathy,
And round her mouth there played a smile
Pure as a soul that knows not guile,
Pure as the new-born light of dawn
That wakes from sleep the wakeful fawn,
Pure as the tears the angels shed
To deck the greenhouse of the dead.

I asked her, if through memory's tears
Shone the bright glow of early years,
And whispered softly, Life's a stray,—
Is it not, pretty, sweetest May?—
Her name—she started from her lull,
Her eyes with tears all-beautiful,
Then answering not from hidden fears,
She cried, 'O God!' and burst to tears.
Ah, bitter hour! ah, sad, sad day
When love mocked poor, confiding May!
Ah, cruel tongue, worse than inhuman,
That wrecks with vows ingenuous woman!

She sobbed as if her heart would break—
O that men saw the wrecks they make!

Good God ! to think that erst sweet child,
Pure as the dew-drop, was beguiled
Into a sin by love-weaved lies,
Enslaved by hollow sympathies,
To satiate lust that seeks strange fires
To whet its passionate desires.
O base, unphilosophic crew,
Hell fain its sin-paved floors would strew
With souls like yours with treachery laden
Who ruin thus each trustful maiden,
And blight for aye with untoward shame
A virtuous and unsullied name.

May smitten by lust's treacherous dart
Yielded her love's divinest part,
Made of her life by hallowed trust
The spectre of despisèd dust,
And by the gift which heaven did send
Was ta'en from her her truest friend,
The majesty of maiden bliss,—
Virtue—none other equals this—
This maiden's hope, this maiden's dower,
O'er which love hath a conqueror's power,
In May was as a full-blown flower

That having reached life's fickle hour,
When amorous winds its beauty frays,
It droops in sorrow and decays.
All that she had in love she gave
To him who made her a living grave,
Who in return for all her love
Left her to reap the tares thereof,—
The callous heart, and sullied name
By which man calls the spouse of shame,
The dire reward of holy vice
Thrust headlong out of paradise,
The wasted frame, the ruined mind,
And the fierce tongues of scorn combined
To quench with scandal's vicious breath
Virtue's frail spark that lighteneth
In every soul while life survives
To guide to peace our straying lives.
If mankind would but heap their wrath
On him who breaks his plighted troth,
If upon him were heaped such shame,
The fires of woe would lose their flame,
And the fierce scourge that stings the soul
Would seldom fall in scorn's control.
Why spurn thy sister for love's sin?—

The frailest of the frail's thy kin.

Ah, May, how came you, sweet, to this?—
But here there's far more woe than bliss,
More pain to mar life's dreams of pleasure
Than we with all our skill could measure,
More biting words in lifetime spoken,
To make our distraught spirits broken,
Than all your fancy dreameth of,
Or can be soothed by human love.
To troublous ways that lead to death
Is each man born to; for the breath
Of man is as the light of day
From golden morn to evening grey
It changes, then with sudden flight
It passeth into sable night.

Come, tell me, May, your sorrows, love,
I'll pity you, and not reprove,
I know too well that your poor heart
Bleeds, aches, and yearneth to depart
Wnere all earth's foulness is made fair,
And deathless pleasure ranges; there
Grief enters not to mar our joy,

And its sweet pastimes never cloy.
There winter comes not to make chill
The heart with many a sickening ill;
There, I have heard the angels say,
'Tis ever sunshine, ever May,
And night ne'er blinds the eyes of day.

Come, tell me, May, your spirit's woes,
In me your sorrows all repose,
And I will strive with pity's balm
The tempests of your soul to calm.
Cease weeping, sweet, your heart will break.

O that men saw the wrecks they make!
With which the strand of life is strewn
Day after day; lives that are hewn
By God to bear immortal souls
Over Time's sin-encumbered shoals.

Her tale of love, a story old,
To me in tears she sadly told,
And as she spoke, I well remember
Her face seemed as a half-burnt ember
Which ever as a kind breath blows

Resumes its fires and brightly glows,
And then becoming pallid grey
With unseen fire it wastes away.
And so with May; when as she spoke
Old passions in her re-awoke
Lighting her cheeks with those same fires
That burned away her old desires.
Then did the winds of memory bleak
Make pale her passion-glowing cheek.
O fertile, ever fruitful bloom,
You blossom but on virtue's tomb;
Like palms that flourish fed with dust,
You only bloom when steeped in lust.
If men would study to be wise
Then poets need not moralize,
Not picture to mankind the pain
Of tears that water earth like rain,
Not hold to man that kindless glass
That shews earth's sorrows as they pass
Down the steep cliff of ruthless time
Unto that land of dismal clime.

Two years ago in youth's full pride
One wooed her to make her his bride;

And told her that without her love,
And the rapt sweets that are thereof,
He could not bear to be alive,
Therefore he asked the maid to wive
With that impassioned speech which stirs
Confiding hearts such as was hers.
So spoke he, and poor May believed,
Alas, but to be sore deceived,—
Not knowing that a trust so pure
As she reposed in him, was sure
Ere many months had passed away
To turn her golden pleasures grey,
Ere autumn's leaves were crisp and red
That she would mourn her love as dead.
Ah cruel, base, designing tongue,
That from her gentle body wrung
Her honour's pledge, her only all,
That such as she their own can call.
How that such men as these are—base—
Can gaze upon a virtuous face,
And not in its ingenuous look
Find for their thoughts a calm rebuke,
I wot not; for to me it seems
As if from Virtue's eye there teems

On every thought of false pretence
A pure condemning influence.
He who this tale of sorrow tells
A thousand times has heard the bells
Of virgin laughter thrill the breeze,
And wept in soul that such as these
Should be betrayed by human kind
Whose words are kindred to their mind,
Words such as these, *Poor maids are bred*
For rich man's lust, not to be wed.
And these be they who soon or late
For England's poor shall legislate,
And some of these by birthright are
At once a peer and senator.
Amongst this noble titled crew
The truly noble are but few:
'Tis sad that such as these should be
Dispensers of morality.

'Twas such an one who did betray
Poor trustful, loving, gentle May.
On such an one's love-treacherous vow
She cast her faith,—more than enow
For twenty high-born maidens' love

Such as we now-a-days hear of,
And on whose brow is daily set
That worthless thing—a coronet,
'Neath which, perchance, there's hid more vice
Than e'er was hurled from Paradise.
I dare not sing that noble love
Dwells not in noble maids to move
The passions of their souls' desires
To pure, absorbing, amorous fires;
For well I know such love as theirs
Surpasses all things, even dares
Compete with angels in its faith,
A love that's stronger, far, than death,
A love that braves oppressing wrong,
A love that hallows life among
The shoals of hope and rocks of woe—
A love such women only know.

Nathless to her who is my theme
The song of love was as a dream
That wreathes our hopes with many a smile,
And only woos us to beguile.
Thus he, whose wiles her heart enmeshed,
Forgot the floweret he had crushed,

E'en slighted the delusive sin
That brought on May the sickening din
Of scandal's tongues, that pitying shame,
Blighting her only dower—her name.
For thus it is such pity shews
Its sorrow for a sister's woes.

O ye who spit from jealous spleen
Upon a frail one's gabardine!
If that ye scorn to touch its hem,
In all your ways why follow them,
Assume their vices with their dress,
Yet seem to scorn their wickedness?
Be sure of this, more sin is hid
From mortal eyes, than e'er is chid,
More vice beneath an ermine cloak
Than prayers and alm-gifts can revoke,
More sin fermenting in their hearts
Than ever such as May imparts
By touch or speech, by kiss or curse,
Or gold from her polluted purse.
Ye love the sin your tongues despise,
She hates the sin her hunger buys;
But yet with lust she bartereth

Lest life should be consumed with death.
Truly, to all men, rich and poor,
The love of days doth e'er endure:
For man lives on in hope of bliss,
Uncertain if succeeding this
Fair world with all its sin and pain,
The soul shall taste such bliss again.
Let Poets picture in their dreams
Those fairer lands where pleasure teems
Like pearly dew or crystal rain
On souls seraphic; still I fain
Would hazard all such joys as these
For earthly, living sympathies;
For to my tearful-laden eyes
Earth doth appear a paradise,
Sweeter, O sweeter, far, since love
Dwells in all things that are thereof.
And, but for envy's chilling sneer,
And kindless hate that bideth here,
And jealousy, and hate that's born of love,
And all the base desires that move
Our natures to unrighteous ways,
Marring the beauty of fair days,
And all foul things that do estrange

Men's hearts from good, the awful change
To after-life would be an hour
Fraught with weird fancies, and the power
That holpeth hope to bear us up
Would be a bitter, bitter cup
Filled with the poison of regret,
The which, not anything as yet
More fearful comes to man in life;
It feeds upon the pangs of strife
Hid in the breast to season pain
While man sails o'er Time's billowy main,
Until with death our spirits be
Havened in immortality,
Where mists of sorrow never fall,
And all is love ambrosial.
Hither we fain would journeying go
When grief makes weary life below;
But that our souls to time are thrall,
And we abide Death's noiseless call,
Fearful if it can truly tell
Unto our hearts our soul's farewell.
Farewell—O word of sacred token,
The sweetest wish by mortal spoken.

When as May's heart with life was full,
And Love's sweet notes were audible,
When youth in blushing joyance swayed
The sceptre of her hopes, and made
The hours of time with rapture glide,
Then she became a wedless bride
To traitorous sin; and, oh, since then
Sorrow pursued her ways, and when
I saw her on that dreary night
Lorn was her mien and sad her plight;
But still for all her past disgrace
Love did illumine her sad face.
Pure love's disgrace—O cruel word!
Would that thy voice were never heard!
Would that the tongue that gives thee speech
Were smitten in the mouths of each
Who dares to mock such sorrow's shame,
And call it by a slighting name.
But there be some whom scandal sets
To utter biting epithets,
Some who draw life from hate and lies,
Subsisting on antipathies,
Ay, some who find in one's distress
The acme of their happiness.

Alas, that such as these should find
A resting-place amongst mankind.
But 'tis a mortal's proud estate
To ever find on earth his mate,
Unsought he finds his spirit's kin
Since life was made the wage of sin;
For sin gives man his life's first breath,
And sin consumes the same in death.

What May had lost, was bartered—sold
On virtue's threshold as of old;
For the same woe that broke her heart
Has ever had its counterpart
Since e'er our mother Eve partook
The fruit that brought on man rebuke,
Or ever love presumes to be
The offspring of our sympathy.

The same false tongue that did betray
May's love, now crieth out to-day
Against those sins that mar our lives,
And against honour's ways contrives;
E'en calls on man, till voice is spent,
In synod, senate, parliament,

To assuage the sufferings of the poor,
And lead to right the evil doer,
Teach those fair ones—those dupes of love—
That pardon cometh from above,
Succour those frail ones whose dire grief
Springs from a love at best but brief,
A love that dulls those radiant eyes
That speak the soul's strange mysteries,
That bends the haughty spirit low
With an unsatisfying, ruthless woe.
Would that these men who thus-wise speak
Could only study to be meek,
Would first, ere they with false intent
Call on their brethren to repent,
Repent themselves for evil done,
And ever vice's pathways shun.
Not so: the thoughts that prompt to this
Urge such to spoil a virgin's bliss.
In hearts that's false, false deeds are meet,
They alway feast upon deceit,
Thinking, What boots it if maids be
The dupes of our duplicity?
They need must be themselves impure
If they permit us to allure

Them from the sacred ways of good—
Upon their own heads be their blood!
An adder's poison whets such lips—
God help the maid who kissing sips
Such deadly pleasures to her soul
And quaffs in faith love's treacherous bowl.
What mystic power hast thou, O Love,
That thou canst thus our passions move,
At once dispel our burning fears,
And buoy us with fantastic years,
Making with thy delicious spell
A paradise or living hell?

Lorn May, wherefore, I cannot tell,
Believed in nought, was infidel.
Perchance it was that suffering much
Without true pity made her such;
Belike it was she thought that God
Chastened with too severe a rod,
Since that her only sin was love,
Forgetting him who 'gainst her strove.
Thus spoke she to a Christian once,
Who with low voice made this response,—
'The wicked flourish as a bay:

So sang the Psalmist, dearest May.'
Then, with a Christian's wonted tact,
Thrust in her hands a holy tract.
But May in her most secret heart
Wished she had played a sinner's part,
Ay, wicked too, I trow would May
Have been that she might as a bay
Have flourished, and the world traduce,
Foiling its pity and abuse.
These thoughts were out of May's control,
They sprang from her rebellious soul;
For the flesh rather loves the faith
That giveth pleasure after death,
Loves the sweet hope that slays our fears
With joys enduring through all years—
That timeless spell divined by man,
To measure which no mortal can,
That season when the soul shall be
Partaker of eternity—
Eternal joy, eternal peace—
The thraldom of our soul's release.

Poor May, poor May, how hard her fate!
Thrust from her virtuous estate—

Think of her wrecked and wasted bliss—
By many a blood-entrancing kiss
Charged with accursèd artifice.
With tears in those large hazel eyes
She waked my secret sympathies
By telling me the sad, sad story
That robbed her of her honour's glory,
Leaving her truly poor, indeed;
For virtue is a holy mead
The rich and poor alike possess
In all its pristine loveliness.

As slowly chimed the midnight bell,
I sorrowing bade lorn May—Farewell.
If well in life one e'er could fare
Whose days were wasting in despair.

JOB'S SOLILOQUY.

In all the mystic dreams of this my life
The fear of death makes bitter all their joys.
In all the hopes that doubtful shadows cast
On the drear marge of depthless Aftertime,
Doubt, gaunt and horrid, penetrates my soul,
And leaves the phantom of desire despoiled
Of all the trancing ways that fashion peace—
Peace in the dreamland of despair and night,
Peace in the desert of eternal drouth,
Peace in the inner peace that mocks our lives
With the fantastic gleam of Paradise.
In this the wildering spectres of my brain
Gather fatuity and fashion forth
In airy mistiness the sickening spell
That makes infatuate our life-day's sport
And casts mid bitter fears the joy of Time.
For my fair soul's completeness do I waste
The treasured hours of life's short-mated years
In casting hope upon that quickening strand

Where Death usurps its unresisting power,
And smites my blindfold Fancy that makes tryst
With peace eternal when its reign begins.
Elohim, Thou, whose favourless designs
Shatter the temple of our earthly bliss
With the keen poison of heart-fretful years,
And the delusive spoil of withering days,
Thou who consumest with aspirings vain
The days of time that garner joys from youth,
Thou who combinest 'gainst our lives with death
That thou may'st feast upon our soul's desires
And fashion us according as thy will doth list,
Upon thine all-absorbent soul, which gives
Omnipotence to hidden shades, shall fall
The flattering vision of such recompenseless years
To harness Thee, the Lord of Hosts, with that dire hour
When futile days shall darken with our shame,
And Future's glowing joys be profileless.
Yet well I know that my Redeemer lives,
And in the latter days upon the earth
He'll stand, to teach us that our inane hopes
Are but the transient phantoms of despair;
For, surely, He will gather us into His fold,

And shew us, that though worms this body spoil,
Tis in our flesh, alone, we can see God.
Thus fade in Time the fleeting hours away
To mock our spirits with a phantom day.

ELEGIACS ON CHARLES DICKENS.

I.

THE light of laughter in this vale of tears
Must pause awhile with sudden smitten breath,
And sorrow lend to life's surviving years
The anguish brought by dire avenging death.

II.

And he is dead! our youth's own dearest friend,
The choice companion of our lonely hours,
Snatched from the bosom of our loves to rend
Our hearts in twain with grief's most mystic powers.

III.

And he is dead! ah, dead to life and love;
Dead to the grief of sympathetic hearts,
Emotionless to all life's pangs; above
He sits enthroned beyond death's poisoned darts.

IV.

And he is dead ! O could he hear the wail
Of bitter woe and uncontrollèd grief
That his dull ears in misery assail,
Our solitary anguish would be brief.

V.

And he is dead ! he whose divining soul
Caught from the depths of darkly shadowed life
The elements that sweep with curbless roll
The surging wrath of heart's rebellious strife.

VI.

Drawn by the melody of early love
Into the visionary vale of Truth,
He struck with ire the thrilling chords thereof,
And stilled the passion of despotic youth.

VII.

He is not dead ; for his life's soul sublime,
Which took its flight ere we could say farewell,
Casteth a radiant glow o'er endless time,
Throned on the empyrean of death's spell.

VIII.

Still the low voice that whispers in the breeze
Murmurs in its rapt solitude his magic name,
And the birds chirping in the summer trees
Echo throughout the world his deathless fame.

IX.

He is not dead; for still his spirit lives
Breathing the purer airs of lovers' sighs;
He cannot die, for that which heaven gives
Can never taste of death—it never dies.

ALBA'S PARTING.

I WOULD much rather not have told you of it.
But since you will that I should tell it—Listen!
Our parting was in suchwise sad, that still
Its memory hangeth heavy on my heart.
And I would thus much say ere I begin:
You know to me, who loved exceeding well,
How well, my heart, alone, can ever know,
Each look, each sigh and tear, each syllable
Was as a volume of sweet poetry.
However, such they cannot be to you;
Nor would I be so vain as think them so;
Still if you knew my love in life, I'm sure
That you would give me all your sympathy
In this my heaviest grief, and, truly, you
Would say my sorrow's very hard to bear.
But then, perchance, I overrate the pain:
Still every man doth think his own woe sorest.
I dare not vaunt my anguish to such bounds
As hope to thrill the fibres of your heart

As it thrills mine ; for you, my dearest friend,
Must hold some things in more esteem than I,
And some contemn that I esteem most worth.
'Tis thus we barter lives for differences.
So if in aught I weary you, forgive my fault ;
For Love its sorrows doth so magnify
That oft we seem to find a woe where none abides.
Meanwhile, if I grow heavy in my tale,
Remember that I told you every look
Of her I loved and cherished in my life,
Each sigh and tear, and every syllable,
Were volumes of sweet poetry to me.

After our honeymoon in Italy,
We both returned to Ireland, there to pass
The best part of our lives beneath the roof
Where my grandmother's sire was born, and died,
Leaving the Hall and all its rich domains
Unto his heiress, Blanche, his only child,
With this express condition in his will,
That he who married her should take his name,
One honoured in the land for centuries,
The which my grandsire did, maintaining it
Through civil strife with honour till his death.

But I had nigh forgot you have not seen
The dear old place since you and I were boys.
You spent your last vacation there, before
You went to Sandhurst, I to Trinity.
Since then, some eighteen years, we have not met.
Oh how the time flies by! What changes come!
Old memories pall new hopes, and Sorrow sits
Weeping with widow's tears the buried past.
The house is much the same as when you saw it,
Save those small changes which new fashions make.
The village, church, and rectory alone
Discard the mocking ways of varied change—
True, true, I see you have forgotten it,
But I will strive and picture it to you.

The river's broken by an old grey weir,
O'er which in wintertime the water falls
In billowy foam, then eddying at the base,
Forming a thousand whirlpools, hurries on
Beneath an iron battlemented bridge
Through shallows and through rapids to the sea.
And by the weir there stands a broken arch
Moss-grown and covered o'er with weeds,
Which in the olden time did span the stream,

O'er which they say the heiress Blanche had driven
While yet it tottered on its buttresses,
Now's but a mouldering relic of the past.
Here in the silence of a midday dream
Lies Lucan straggling by the Liffey's bank.

'Twas in the village church Norah and I
Were wed—surely, you recollect the church
With its tall pointed spire and fickle vane,
And our square pew with curtains of blue silk,
And the large iron gates, the village school
In front, with jasmine trellising its walls,
And roses peeping through the snow-drop shrubs.
You don't? Well, it's the only thing that's changed,
Roses and jasmine long have ceased to bloom.—
'Twas in that self-same church I married Norah—
In love we called her Alba; for her hair
In golden tresses on her shoulders fell
Like sunbeams breaking through a southern dawn.
And like the dawn she passed to eve and night
To shine in other lands with brighter glow.

I will not tell you of the house, for you
Will see it for yourself to-morrow night.
But let me tell you of our last farewell.

A summer's night full of sad memories
Was that when Alba whispered me adieu,
When her sweet lips in kisses clung to mine,
Her arms clasped round my neck as if to bind
Her fluttering soul a longer while to earth.
How vainly struggle we for life when death
Doth beckon us to keep with him our tryst!
And as she looked upon me with her glassy eyes—
Good God! eyes that once sparkled like a gem—
She on my shoulder laid her heavy head,
And weeping, kissing and caressing me,
As if we first time met after long years,
Said softly, "O 'tis hard, 'tis very hard to part,
To say farewell—to say a long good-bye.
Perchance we'll never meet: ah, yes, we'll meet
Beyond—beyond—": then fell she back as dead,
And my heart leaped in awful fear, as leaps
The heart betimes when woes expected come.

You know we loved each other wondrous well,
From letters I wrote you while we were wooing.
I'll not say better than e'er others loved;
But full as well as those who love their best.
Yet, you would scarce believe it, there were some

Who said we lived unhappily, they spake,
And well they knew it, base, unfounded lies—
But let that pass—scandal must feast itself.
Well, when I thought her dead I wept aloud,
And leaning over her to kiss her lips,
A burning tear fell on her face. It seemed
As if it called her soul to earth again,
For opening her dull eyes she gazed on me,
And said, "Why weep? We part a little while
Ere long to meet again; 'twill seem to me
A night's rest; for my soul shall slumber, love,
Until thy voice shall waken it—until
Thy loving voice shall waken it. Yes, yes,
My soul shall sleep till then." O had you seen,
Even amid these hopes, the tears flood down her cheeks,
Then had you known, if God had willed it so,
How she would fain have tarried with us still;
For life is certain, but succeeding life
There's nought but hope, perchance a cruel hope.—
She then in her damp hand caught mine, and said,
"You know, sweetheart, you wooed me with a song,
And in a song our souls first met in love,
Now I would say farewell even while you sing
That same old song the which you won me with.—

No, no, not sing—I know your heart, like mine,
Is far too full of grief to sing ; but sit
You down and play me that sweet melody
Which both of us did love to hear. There, there,
A kiss, sweetheart, another kiss, my love,
Now play the song :—my soul awaits to hear."
And then as one who dreams doth play, I played
That sweetest song of Mendelssohn's, "O lift
Thine eyes unto the mountains from whence comes
Thy help." The last chord seemed a dying song
Whose lingering strain wings to the distant spheres.
And as I paused to hear my Alba speak
And tell me how she liked the melody,
I heard the green leaves rustle and the low
Winds sigh close by the open oriel.
'Twas her soul winging to her heavenly tryst
Made the leaves flutter in its mystic flight.

Forgive me if I weep—ah, you weep too.
How sweet a thing, dear friend, is sympathy !

DEDICATION.

You remember the day when we wedded,
That day full of rapturous love,
When with kisses we hailed our souls' union,
And God heard our vows from above.

You remember the words that you uttered,
And the passionate speech that was yours;
For your hopes were unburthened of doubtings
And your heart beat with joy that endures.

How you told me 'mid tears and embraces
Your vision of life was divine;
For the summer had brought you love's harvest,
And I was none other's but thine.

And you looked on the fields heavy-laden
With the gold of the fruits of increase,
And you smiling impressed on my forehead
The seal of your pleasure and peace.

Then my soul was so full I could speak not;
But touching your lips in my joy,
I murmured within me in gladness,—
This triumph of love lacks alloy.

Then I laid you, love, close to my bosom,
And watched your soul beam in your eyes
Till their luminous splendour bedazzled
The lustre of stars in the skies.

And I saw you would fain make confession
Of the mystic desires of your soul;
But the tempest of passions conflicting
Held the thoughts you would speak in control.

And I saw by the bloom and the blossom
Of love, that the vintage of years
Should beguile our youth's fancy with pastime,
And nourish our souls for their spheres.

Then I said, surely earth is a heaven,
And love is the jewel of life,
And woman's the star that illumines
The darkness of sorrow and strife.

Such a woman as you are, my darling,
The world sees but seldom and few;
Though a mother and wife still we're wooing,
Yea, and till our lives' severance we'll woo.

Still your harvest of love I am reaping;
But I gather and garner in vain:
For the fruit of your love e'er increases,
And faithfulness ripens the grain.

Though we've parted a season, our spirits
Commingle in slumbers and dreams;
With the dawn comes the hope of love's message,
And sunset brings peace on its beams.

On that day—that old day of Love's glory—
Did I consecrate joyance and song,
And the mystical pleasures of life-time,
And the hopes that bear youth-tide along.

And the suns of new morrows that hallow
The sombre and grief-burthened nights,
And ambition that leadeth to honour,
And love and its myriad delights.

And the beauties that tremble reflected
In eyes that are jewelled with tears,
And the season that travails with anguish—
The end and beginning of years.

These are flowers that I've culled from this garden
To garland the days that are fleet;
So I bring them to you ere they wither,
And lay them in love at your feet.

ROME, *May*, 1872.

NOTES.

Page 11.

Wandered to Nemi, where a raging fire.

The Lake of Nemi, which tradition says was once a volcano, is close to the village of Genzano, and but a short drive from Albano. It is one of the loveliest spots near Rome. When I visited it last year it appeared to be the very emblem of peace; the sheet of water looked like a mirror in a frame of wooded hills. Although it was the month of February, the sky was a bright blue, and the sun deliciously warm. There is on its borders a charming villa belonging to the Duke Sforza Cesarini.

Page 132.

Come batte il mio cuore! e come lento.

I have written these few lines in Italian simply from caprice. But that they may be understood by all, I here will translate them:—

How my heart beats! and, O, with what slow tread
Passes the time that waiteth upon love!
O how this ire doth torture me!—He comes—
He comes—O joy! Thou'rt welcome, Cardinal.

Page 139.

An offshoot of the house of Aragon.

Alfonzo, Duke of Bisceglie, natural son of Alfonzo II., King of Naples.

Page 139.

He was a man whose upright mien bespoke
His mind.

Muratori speaking of him says, "He was a prince famous in the world, who in sense and valour had few equals in his time." (Un Principe glorioso nel mondo che in senno e valore ebbe pochi pari al suo tempo). I, however, make Lucrezia give him not altogether so glowing a character.

Page 139.

But speak, my daughter; if thou ever loved.

I have here adopted the Italian mode of address. Here, for the first time, Bembo addresses Lucrezia in the second person singular, although she has done so from the commencement of the scene. The second person singular is only used in Italian, as in French, when the speakers are on terms of intimacy.

Page 140.

My husband died by the assassin's hand.

According to Guicciardini and Muratori, Cæsar Borgia, Lucrezia's brother, was his murderer.

Page 153.

AMENSIS.

By tradition amongst the Mohammedans the wife of Potiphar

is said to have been named Zuleïkha. (Vide note to verse 21 sura xii., of Monsieur Kasimirski's French translation of the Koran). I, however, preferred to call her by a historical Egyptian name, and therefore chose that of the daughter of Thotmes I., who afterwards became queen of Egypt.

Page 162.

Nay, lady; such a place we wot not of.

I maintain that throughout the Old Testament there is not a passage that can be quoted which clearly justifies us in thinking that the ancient Jews believed in the Immortality of the Soul. On the contrary, there are many which warrant us in believing they entertained no such hope. It is a fact, also, which may not be generally known among theologians, that some years ago Rabbis, deputed by the chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, went about Egypt selling a sort of indulgence called, *Helek le golam aba*, (The Hope of a future state), the proceeds of which were to have been set apart for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. Whether they ever came to England I cannot tell.

Page 164.

Who is Elohim, Adonai, God.

The various Hebrew appellations of the Almighty.

Page 167.

Molten by An, she overflows to floods.

The Egyptian god An, in Hebrew On, was supposed to represent the sun. The chief seat of his worship was Heliopolis. It was the daughter (Asenath) of the Priest of this God whom Pharaoh gave Joseph to wife. See *Genesis*, chap. xli. 45.

Page 168.

To tell in liquid strains the hallowed love of El.

By El, Joseph means Jehovah.

Page 184.

Wherefore did he choose you, Apuriu.

The Egyptians called the Jews Apuriu (Hebrews).

Page 190.

O sweeter, far, than choice Anthylla wine.

According to Athenæus this was one of the choicest of Egyptian wines. It was also one of those used in the sacrifices. The city of Anthylla, from whence the celebrated wine came was required to supply the wife of the reigning king of Egypt with shoes. See *Herodotus* ii. 98.

Page 198.

For, truly, man's desire is woman's love.

It is Samuel Taylor Coleridge, if I remember rightly, says, "The desire of man is for woman; but the desire of a woman is for the desire of a man." How true this is!

Page 199.

Touching the cat-faced goddess' festival.

The goddess, Pasht, who, according to Herodotus (Book ii., 59), was the same as Diana, was represented as having the face of a cat, which animal was held sacred by the Egyptians. It was death to any person who was known to have killed one.

Page 200.

It was not Set's device this sympathy.

Set was the Egyptian God of Evil. He was synonymous with our Satan or Devil.

Page 206.

"Post Mortem Nulla Voluptas.

My learned reader will permit me to translate this for those who do not understand Latin. *After death there are no pleasures.* It is a portion of the Epicurean Maxim—"Bibamus, mauducamus, post mortem nulla Voluptas." It is alluded to by Saint Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians (xv. 32) :—"Let us eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die."

Page 223.

For that mist-land—the spirit's Aiden.

The invisible world, or Hades, whither our spirit is supposed to fly after the breath hath forsaken that insensate and corruptible part of us called—the body.

Page 250.

Arezzo, to thy memory I wreathe.

I believe Arezzo has been the birthplace of more poets than any other city in Italy. Here Michele Donate Guido, commonly called Fra Guittone, Petrarch, Redi, Aretino, Sgricci the Improvisatore, and many other minor poets were born. It was also the birthplace of Guido Monaco the inventor of musical notes.

Page 251.

Genius incomprehensible! to thee.

Tommaso Sgricci, an Aretian noble, was one of the most ex-

traordinary men who ever lived. His power of improvisation was marvellous. He improvised no less than one hundred tragedies. There are, however, but a few extant, having been saved from oblivion by the aid of stenography. Of these, which I believe are extremely scarce, being long out of print, I possess *Crispo*, improvised November 3rd, 1827; *Tieste*, improvised the evening of November 10th, 1827; and Two Acts of *Samson*, improvised November 20th, 1827; also *The Fall of Missolonghi*, (La Caduta di Missolunghi), improvised in Paris on the evening of the 23rd of November; and *Charles I. of England*, which was improvised in the same city, before the Académie Française in the Théâtre Loubois, April 25th, 1824. The above I obtained from his only surviving descendants, two grand-nephews, one is a printer, and the other a tobacconist, still resident in Arezzo.

Page 270.

When winds breathe softly o'er the bright green sea.

This is a translation of the Fifth Idyll of Moskhos, beginning :—

Τὰν ἄλα τὰν γλαυκὰν ὅταν ὤνεμος ἀτρέμα βάλλῃ.

Page 289.

On the doorstead of Mispeh stood Seila.

The Jewish historian, Philo, tells us that Seila was the name of Jephthah's daughter.

THE END.

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